APRIL 10 / APRIL 17, 2023

TIME



‘NO VOY A HACER OTRA COSA PARA QUE A TI TE GUSTE’

EL MUNDO DE BAD BUNNY

por **ANDREW R. CHOW & MARIAH ESPADA**

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TIME
VOL. 201, NOS. 13–14 | 2023



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7
The Brief

25
The View

36
Solamente
Bad Bunny remade the rules of popular music—and did it while singing only in Spanish
By Andrew R. Chow and Mariah Espada

42
Ukraine v. Putin
Skeptical of the existing system of international justice, Ukraine wants to establish a tribunal devoted exclusively to Russian war crimes
By Simon Shuster

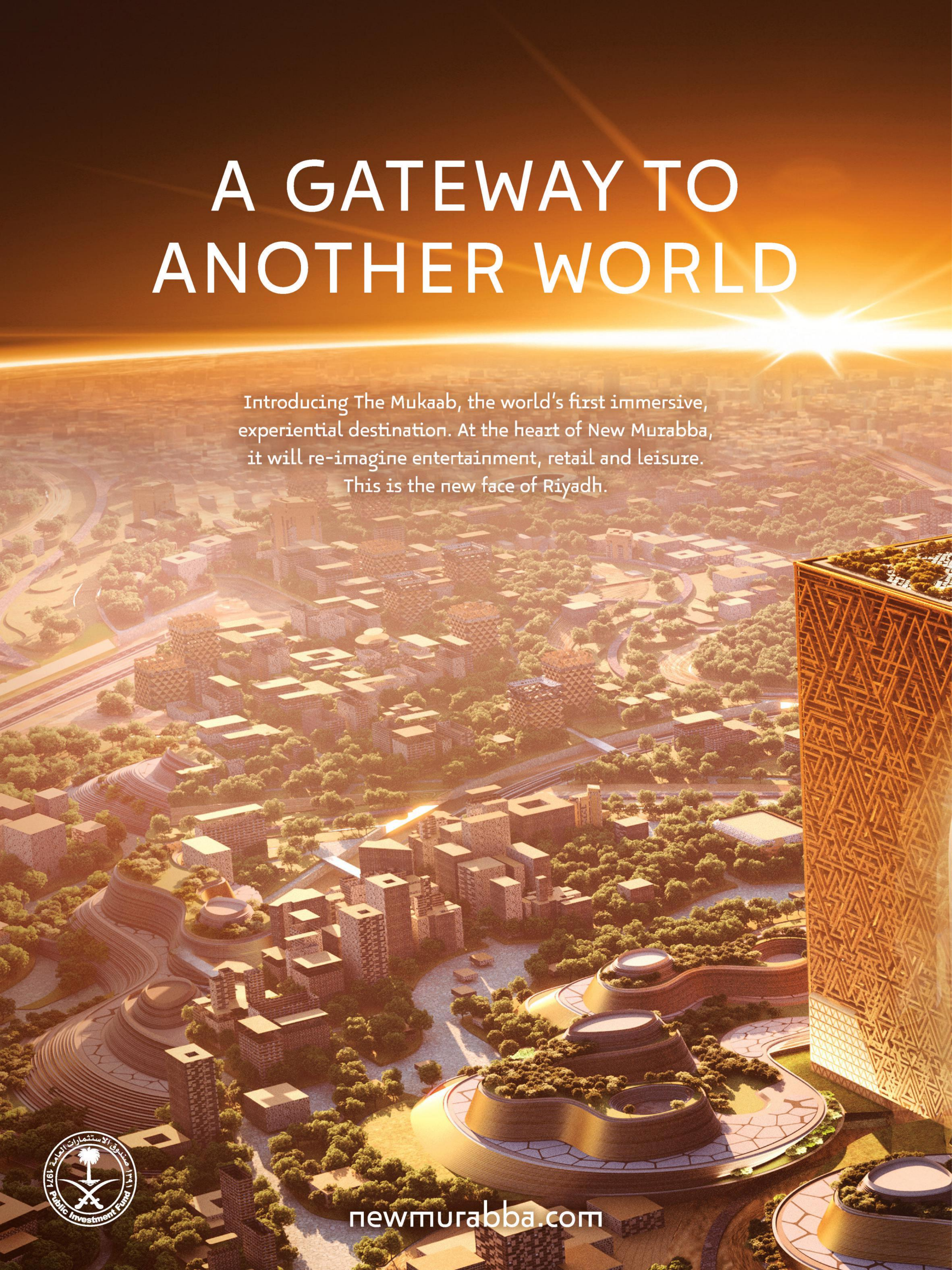
46
The Waters of Paris
The decades-long, multibillion-dollar, and apparently successful effort to clean the world's most romantic river
By Vivienne Walt

52
A Bilbao Story
Frank Gehry pays a visit to the museum that made him the world's most celebrated architect, as it turns 25
By Belinda Luscombe

57
Time Off

The Seine near the Pont du Carrousel, during a July 1949 heat wave

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NEW MURABBA

Making medical history

JONAS SALK WAS HOME WITH HIS WIFE, BUT SHE COULD tell his mind was elsewhere—back in his lab, where work was proceeding apace on what would become the first vaccine against polio. "Why Jonas," said Donna Salk, according to TIME's March 29, 1954, cover story, "you're not listening to me at all."

"My dear," he was said to have joked, "I'm giving you my undevoted attention."

That Jonas Salk's devotions lay elsewhere was well known to his intimates. They lay in the battle against polio—a disease that had killed or paralyzed more than 52,000 American boys and girls in a single summer just two years earlier. They lay in his yearslong effort to develop a vaccine against the disease. And they lay too in the great field trial that was to begin just weeks after the TIME cover appeared, during which more than 2 million American schoolchildren would be queuing up to receive either Salk's vaccine or a placebo. It would be the greatest, most sprawling public-health experiment conducted before or since.



When TIME visited Salk, the scientist was battling pushback from an anti-vaccine community similar to the one that has persisted into the 21st century. Radio personality Walter Winchell had helped spread the dark lie that warehouses around the country were stockpiling little white coffins to hold the bodies of the hundreds of thousands of children who would surely be claimed by Salk's infernal potion. As the field trial approached, those rumors did their work, with multiple communities in multiple states pulling out of the experiment, forcing Salk and the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis—the nonprofit that was backing his work—to scramble for replacement populations or to sweet-talk the walkouts back into the trial. What Salk needed, and what he got from TIME's coverage, was an endorsement of his scientific bona fides.

It is too great a stretch to say any one story could be credited with the success of the field trial that would follow. But it is not too much to say that the public came to trust the scientist—and that the scientist delivered. On April 12, 1955, one year after the field trial began, the polio vaccine was declared safe, effective, and powerful. Generations on, polio is at the brink of extinction, run to ground in just two remaining countries—Afghanistan and Pakistan—where it causes only a handful of cases each year. The disease that was once a global scourge will soon follow smallpox into the epidemiological history books. The work began with Salk, a man with a story that once needed to be—and was—powerfully told.

—JEFFREY KLUGER

To mark TIME's 100th anniversary, throughout this year we'll revisit some of our most influential covers. Find more of this series at time.com/100-years



TIME100

The reader poll

Though its editors decide, TIME asks readers every year who should be on its list of 100 most influential people. Vote on 2023 candidates—including *(from top, left to right)*, actor Michelle Yeoh, business tycoon Elon Musk, Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, singer Beyoncé, the WNBA's Brittney Griner, and soccer star Lionel Messi—at **time.com/time100-readerpoll**

The broadcast

Watch *TIME100: The World's Most Influential People* on ABC on Sunday, April 30, at 7 p.m. E.T. The show will take viewers inside the exclusive TIME100 gala, with special musical performances.

On the covers



Bad Bunny's World
"I'm not going to do something else for you to like it."
Photograph by Elliot & Erick Jiménez for TIME



Photograph by Eric Feferberg—AFP/Getty Images

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The Brief

‘AGAIN’

BY PHILIP ELLIOTT

After the Nashville mass shooting, President Joe Biden comes back to one word



INSIDE

TIKTOK IN THE DOCK

A LOOK AT PILLS AND LONG COVID

FIVE WAYS TO APOLOGIZE WELL

PHOTOGRAPH BY SETH HERALD

THERE IS ONE WORD IN JOE BIDEN'S VOCABULARY that he surely wishes he could purge: *again.*

It's been a constant during his two-plus years as President and his eight as the understudy. Over that time, Biden has repeatedly had to shoehorn *again* into his planned remarks on other subjects, to pepper it into hastily called statements from a White House podium or en route to another event.

"You know, the shooter in this situation reportedly had two assault weapons and a pistol—two AK-47," Biden said on March 27 in the White House's East Room, where he was forced to preface his speech to the Small Business Administration's summit for women with an update on the school shooting earlier that day in Nashville. "So, I call on Congress, again," he said, "to pass my assault-weapons ban. It's about time that we begin to make some more progress."

Progress will be hard to find. Detour, much easier. And Biden knows it. School shootings, music-festival massacres, and grocery-store slaughters alike have been unable to soften Americans' sclerosis when it comes to gun rights.

Since Biden took office in early 2021, there have been more than 50,000 deaths by gun violence, according to the Gun Violence Archive. Since Jan. 1, 2021, there have been 1,468 mass shootings—defined as four or more people shot, not including the shooter—or 1.8 each day. The March 27 shooting in Nashville that left three students, the head of the private school, a janitor, and a substitute teacher dead was only the latest to seize headlines. Police are trying to piece together the motives behind the 28-year-old perpetrator's attack on the 200-student Covenant School, but officials noted a doctor had been treating the attacker for an emotional disorder—a fact that did not block the recent legal purchase of seven firearms.

> 'I call on Congress, again, to pass my assault-weapons ban.'
>
> —JOE BIDEN
> PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Biden has repeatedly deployed *again* as a drumbeat in his remarks, a bit of venting and self-flagellation. "I am determined once again to ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines," he said during a visit to a Monterey Bay, Calif., Boys and Girls Club two weeks before the Nashville shooting. Back in January, he was hammering the point, too: "We're going to ban assault weapons again. I did it once as a Senator. We're going to do it again."

Biden was talking about the 1994 Crime Bill, which banned assault weapons for 10 years. The votes weren't there in Congress to renew it in 2004, in large part because Democrats, who blamed their shellacking in the wake of the bill's passage—the House had a net 54-seat swing in the 1994 midterms—on Republicans' successfully fomenting outrage over the ban, shied from voting for it again.

Even in the earliest days of his presidency, Biden was leaning on *again* to imply a frustration, an exhaustion, an anger that seldom boils over in public. "Let me say it again: gun violence in this country is an epidemic, and it's an international embarrassment," Biden said from the Rose Garden in April 2021, just 78 days into his term. A month later, Biden was at it again, speaking to his first joint sessions of Congress: "We need a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines again. Don't tell me it can't be done. We've done it before. And it worked."

***AGAIN.* IT'S A SIMPLE WORD.** Most people don't have much of a hang-up on it. It's one of those throwaway words that pepper daily conversation without too much importance. But for Biden and those around him, it's a reminder that despite an unflinching attention to the domestic challenge, he doesn't exactly have a lot to show for it.

True, the National Rifle Association is a shell of its former self, decimated by management and financial crises. Its political operation is a shadow of its once giant stature, yet it still commands fear in lawmakers, especially Republicans who know even the slightest deviation from all-guns-are-to-be-defended orthodoxy could cost them their seat. In the wake of the May 2022 shooting in Uvalde, Texas, that left 19 students and two educators dead, GOP Senator Kevin Cramer of North Dakota was blunt when asked what voters would do if he considered any real check on guns: "Most would probably throw me out of office."

It's brutal, but true. Americans overwhelmingly support specific tightened controls on guns, with even the least popular restriction—a ban on assault-style weapons—still logging 63% support among all Americans, according to Pew. But Americans are deeply divided on the broad notion of "gun control," largely deemed a clunker in a country where 45% of homes have at least one gun. In last year's midterms, support for stricter gun laws found support among 56% of voters, according to exit polls; 76% of Democrats agreed, while 88% of Republicans, who have used gun rights as a stand-in for freedom from government nosiness, did not.

Yet *again* has never been far from the lexicon of Biden's speechwriters. For a politician who can sometimes be mistaken for an Irish poet, the fatalism is hard to miss. "I had hoped, when I became President, I would not have to do this again," Biden said after the Uvalde shooting. But Biden did, again, have to comfort a nation that remains exhausted from the drumbeat of news of mass shootings yet lacks interest in doing much to yield a pause. There is no reason to think Biden won't have to use the word again. ◻

The Brief is reported by Olivia B. Waxman and Julia Zorthian

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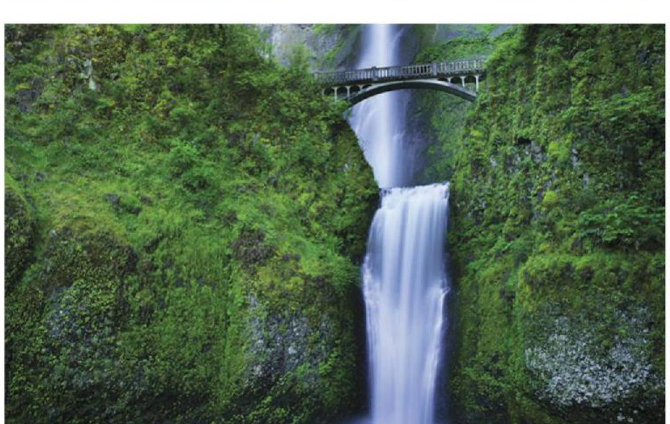
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Havoc in the Southeast

A battered vehicle leans against the wreckage of Chuck's Dairy Bar in Rolling Fork, Miss., on March 26, two days after severe and deadly thunderstorms ripped through the Southeast U.S., prompting the Mississippi governor to declare a state of emergency. Tornadoes killed at least 26 people in Mississippi and Alabama, and razed or damaged buildings across the region.

THE BULLETIN

The clock ticks on TikTok over security concerns

TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew *(right)* was grilled by U.S. lawmakers at a congressional hearing on March 23, amid fresh concerns about the app's ties to China and its data security. The Biden Administration, the intelligence community, and lawmakers say they worry Americans' app-usage data may be weaponized by the Chinese state. The hearing came after the White House indicated it may ban the app in the U.S. if TikTok's Chinese parent company, Bytedance, refuses to sell its stake. Setting up a confrontation, Beijing said it would oppose any forced sale.

WASHINGTON'S CONCERNS TikTok, which has 150 million users in the U.S., has emerged as one of the most contentious elements in the nation's deepening rivalry with China. The Biden Administration is reportedly concerned about China's harnessing user data to power influence operations aimed at Americans. "We do not trust TikTok will ever embrace American values," said Cathy Rodgers, the Republican chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

TIKTOK'S RESPONSE The company has denied that U.S. citizens' data is at risk, saying sensitive user data is kept on U.S. soil, the data cannot be accessed from Beijing, and the company is subject to U.S. audits. But those efforts have done little to dispel Washington's worries, and calls for a ban are growing.

THE REALITY Apprehensions about TikTok are fueled by Chinese law, which obliges any company or citizen to aid state intelligence. Still, some observers say the biggest risk to Americans' privacy is not China, but a system in which any tech company can harvest users' data. "While Congress has been up in arms about TikTok, it has failed to pass even the most basic comprehensive privacy legislation to protect our data from being misused by all the tech companies that collect and mine it," wrote Julia Angwin, founder of investigative tech news site the Markup, in a *New York Times* op-ed.

—BILLY PERRIGO



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GOOD QUESTION

Should I take a pill to prevent Long COVID?

BY JAMIE DUCHARME

RECENT PRELIMINARY RESEARCH HAS found that certain medications may reduce the chance of developing Long COVID if taken shortly after catching COVID-19.

One of the most promising is Paxlovid, an antiviral authorized to treat COVID-19 for people at high risk of severe disease, including elderly adults and people with underlying conditions. In a March 23 study of more than 280,000 people, researchers found that people in this category who took Paxlovid within five days of testing positive were 26% less likely to have Long COVID symptoms six months later.



A study found Paxlovid decreased the risk of Long COVID for vulnerable people

The other intriguing drug is metformin, a Type 2 diabetes drug approved in the 1990s. Research suggests it may have antiviral properties too. In one recent study (which has not yet been peer-reviewed), overweight or obese adults who took metformin when they had COVID-19 cut their risk of Long COVID by more than 40%, compared with those who didn't take the drug.

Should the general population consider taking these drugs to prevent Long COVID? Experts agree that it's too soon to recommend that. Even the most promising study results need to be confirmed before they influence medical decisions. "We zig and we zag on evidence all the time," says Dr. Harlan Krumholz, a professor at the Yale School of Medicine who is studying Paxlovid's effects on Long COVID. "To simply start telling everybody to start taking a medication" is overzealous, he says.

Studies have shown that Paxlovid doesn't impact COVID-19 severity and symptoms much for lower-risk people up to 28 days after their illnesses begin. Krumholz says it's worth tracking the drug's effects for longer, but as of now, no strong data suggest that younger, healthy people should be taking it.

Since metformin was studied among overweight or obese U.S. adults—a category that includes most of the population—it may be more broadly useful, argues Dr. David Boulware, a professor at the University of Minnesota Medical School and co-author of the recent study. Boulware took metformin when he caught COVID-19 last summer, based on the positive data coming from his study. But, he says, it's one thing for a physician to make a personal choice or to recommend a drug for a specific patient, and another to make a sweeping recommendation for all.

Dr. Anand Viswanathan, a clinical assistant professor at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine, agrees that recommending metformin to the general public would be premature. The research "represents a good early signal," he says. But "we need more studies to corroborate that data before I would vouch for mass use."

Both Paxlovid and metformin are safe, but they come with possible side effects including gastrointestinal issues, muscle pain, and unpleasant aftertastes, as well as rarer but more serious issues. Plus, Paxlovid interacts with several common medications, Viswanathan says, so patients may have to pause those during treatment. That may be worthwhile for high-risk COVID-19 patients, but it's a harder sell for people who may not even benefit from Paxlovid.

Drug shortages could also occur if everyone with COVID-19 starts clamoring for them, Viswanathan says. "These medications are a limited resource, they have side effects, and we should be prioritizing their use for the intended patient populations that would actually get the [proven] benefit," he says.

Advice may change in the future as more research comes together. But for now, experts say, it's best to use Paxlovid and metformin in the ways regulators have authorized them. ◻

MILESTONES

EXPELLED

Rahul Gandhi

Opposition leader

RAHUL GANDHI, THE de facto leader of India's main opposition party, was expelled from Parliament after being criminally convicted of defamation on March 23.

Gandhi's question in a 2019 speech—"Why do all thieves have Modi as their surname?"—brought a two-year prison sentence from a judge in Gujarat, and more questions about the trend toward authoritarianism in the world's largest democracy under Narendra Modi, India's Prime Minister.

"These are flimsy and cooked-up charges," Praveen Chakravarty, a spokesperson for the Indian National Congress, told TIME in a statement. The party ruled India for 54 of its 75 years of independence, and Gandhi's father, grandmother, and great-grandfather served as Prime Ministers.

Gandhi can file an appeal. If he loses, he will not be able to contest any Indian elections for the next eight years.

—ASTHA RAJVANSHI





Floods like this in Peru on March 12 will happen more as the climate warms

RELEASED

'Final' climate report

Unsettling unknowns

THE SCARIEST PART OF A LANDMARK NEW climate report may be what scientists don't know. On March 20, the U.N. International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the final volume in a series of reports outlining experts' latest understanding of climate science. It declared the science "unequivocal" and warned that even with urgent action we will face a dramatic uptick in catastrophic events—from droughts to floods—that have become telltale signs of a rapidly warming world. But for all that scientists can confidently say, most worrisome are the "known unknowns"—potential outcomes scientists know could happen even if they don't know exactly when or how. Near the middle of the 37-page summary for policymakers, scientists explain the "likelihood and risks of unavoidable, irreversible or abrupt changes."

It's striking both how close we may be to crossing a number of these points of no return, and how little we know about them. Take the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC). This system of ocean currents is a key regulator of Atlantic Ocean temperatures and, in turn, maintaining land temperatures, particularly in North America. The IPCC says scientists have "medium confidence" that the AMOC will not abruptly collapse before 2100. But if it did, it would remake weather patterns and disrupt "human activities."

Another known unknown is the scale of sea-level rise. In high-emissions scenarios in which countries abandon climate commitments, global average sea levels are expected to rise up to 1 m (about 3 ft.) by 2100. But because the science of rapidly melting ice sheets remains difficult for scientists to understand, that number could also end up being 2 m in the same time frame—which could mean the difference between survival and destruction for coastal communities.

The more the planet warms, the more likely we are to experience unpredictable catastrophic changes. The stakes could be world-changing: the loss of ecosystems, the rapid remaking of regional climates, and the destruction of entire regions. Climate events of this magnitude are referred to as tipping points: singular climatic events that can instantly reshape our understanding of climate systems. But they aren't the only terrifying known unknowns.

The new report also lays out how the future becomes more difficult to predict as climate change proceeds. Impacts that scientists could project today will effectively become more difficult to predict when they intersect with other climate effects. Food insecurity, for example, could drive changes in agricultural practices, which would in turn affect the climate.

Flipping through three decades of IPCC reports, it's easy to see how the science has become more certain and more urgent. The IPCC is not expected to publish another report for at least six years. In that time, the science will evolve, as will the human impacts. It's also likely that global warming will surpass the 1.5°C mark identified as a danger zone that may trigger some of these tipping points. By then we should know more about these known unknowns too. We can only hope that the knowledge brings relief, not the alternative.

—JUSTIN WORLAND

RELEASED

Paul Rusesabagina, the hotelier **who inspired the movie *Hotel Rwanda,*** from a Rwandan prison after his sentence from a disputed 2020 arrest was commuted on March 23.

POSTPONED

King Charles' planned March 26 state visit to France. After more than a million people across the country took part in protests against President Emmanuel Macron's pension reforms, Buckingham Palace said the trip will be rescheduled.

ARRESTED

Actor Jonathan Majors by police officers in New York City, **on charges of assault and harassment,** which he denies, following reports of a "domestic dispute" on March 25.

PURCHASED

Failed **Silicon Valley Bank by First Citizens Bank,** in a government-backed deal announced on March 27.

ELECTED

Humza Yousaf, now poised to become **Scotland's new First Minister,** after winning the Scottish National Party leadership race March 27.



PAXLOVID: FABIAN SOMMER—DPA/PICTURE ALLIANCE/GETTY IMAGES; GANDHI: KABIR JHANGIANI—NURPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES; CLIMATE: ALDAIR MEJIA—AP; YOUSAF: JEFF J MITCHELL—GETTY IMAGES



Tourists at the White House on *Aug. 8, 1974, the day Nixon announced his resignation*

POLITICS

The history of Presidents who (almost) got indicted

BY OLIVIA B. WAXMAN

DONALD TRUMP COULD MAKE HISTORY ONCE again—this time as the first former U.S. President ever to be criminally indicted. If it happens, it's apt to be by the Manhattan grand jury probing his alleged hush-money payment to former porn star Stormy Daniels before the 2016 election. Daniels, real name Stephanie Clifford, says she and Trump had an affair; Trump denies this.

"Like all things with Trump, it's unprecedented," says Barbara Perry, a presidential historian at the University of Virginia's Miller Center. Ulysses S. Grant was the first President to be arrested, for speeding on a horse and buggy in 1872. But the Trump case would go down as one of the biggest political scandals in American history—even if the charges relate to the seemingly mundane offense of bookkeeping fraud. Criminal history, as it pertains to U.S. Presidents, is pretty brief.

The Watergate scandal is the closest parallel. Richard Nixon stepped down in 1974 after tapes revealed (among other crimes) his role in the cover-up of the 1972 break-in at a Democratic National Committee office in the Watergate complex. Several Nixon advisers, from the White House lawyer to the Attorney General, served prison time. While the Department of Justice initially argued that a President couldn't be indicted on a criminal charge, Nixon was not assured that protection postpresidency, so his successor, Gerald Ford, pardoned him. But a September 1974 Gallup poll reported 53% of Americans thought the pardon was the wrong thing to do, and it's one of the reasons Ford was voted out of office in the next election.

Arrests of major federal officials have a longer history. Albert Fall, Secretary of the Interior under President Warren G. Harding, was convicted of bribery in 1929 for accepting hundreds of thousands of dollars in Liberty bonds after allowing a private company to lease oil reserves in Wyoming known as Teapot Dome. Back then, TIME called Fall "the first felon in a President's cabinet in U.S. history." As biographer Robert Dallek explained the significance of the scandal, "People in the government were selling the administration to the highest bidder, using their government power to exploit bad positions to make a lot of money." Harding came to be viewed as corrupt. Increased press scrutiny revealed that he had a mistress. The stress of the scandal is thought to have led to his fatal heart attack in 1923.

'Like all things with Trump, it's unprecedented.'

—BARBARA PERRY, PRESIDENTIAL HISTORIAN

BILL CLINTON WAS the last President who was close to facing criminal charges. Paula Jones, a receptionist, claimed she suffered emotional damage after Clinton exposed himself to her in a hotel room in May 1991, when he was the governor of Arkansas, and sued for sexual harassment. The case went to the Supreme Court, which in *Clinton v. Jones* set "a precedent that a President can be sued for actions allegedly taken before he becomes President—that in turn led to an impeachment," says Perry. Clinton did have to pay civil damages to Jones, and the suit brought to light other womanizing behavior, including a roughly two-year relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. However, while Clinton was impeached in December 1998 and acquitted in February 1999, the scandal didn't impact his popularity.

Trump was impeached twice and, while losing office, won more votes than in 2016. He's campaigning for 2024 under the cloud not only of the Manhattan grand jury, but also an Atlanta grand jury investigating election interference, and federal probes into his role in Jan. 6 and handling of classified documents. Whether criminal charges will hurt or help is a topic of lively debate. ◻

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CHINA WATCH
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Investment sentiment upbeat

Overseas firms say China's economic rebound and positive signals from government are encouraging

BY MA SI, ZHONG NAN and ZHENG XIN





From top: A visitor uses a flight simulator at the Honeywell stand at the fifth China International Import Expo in Shanghai last year. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Visitors experience Qualcomm's extended reality devices during the fifth CIIE. TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

China's steady economic rebound, encouraging signals and efficient policies introduced during the two sessions political gathering in Beijing in March are boosting confidence among multinational companies operating in the country.

Believing that China's growth this year will outpace that of most major economies, executives said they are seeing many more opportunities in areas such as healthcare, consumption, advanced manufacturing and innovation-driven development.

Eager to turn those prospects into reality, foreign companies are ramping up investment, expanding their business lines and chalking up medium-to-long-term plans for steady growth with a rosy view of China's high-quality economic upgrade in the coming years.

Ulrich Stefer, chief financial officer of Bayer Group Greater China, said: "China, without any doubt, will play a crucial role in impacting global growth this year as the world's second-largest economy. We notice that various international financial institutions and investment banks have raised their predictions for China's economic growth this year."

Highlighting the country's massive market, sophisticated industrial system, strong supply chain competitiveness and the improving business environment, Stefer said, "The Chinese market remains extremely attractive on a far-reaching level for multinational companies, including Bayer, to join and expand their investment."

The strong commitment to the Chinese market follows the country's emphasis on post-COVID-19 economic recovery, with the GDP growth target set at about 5% for this year. According to the latest Government Work Report, China will focus on intensified and more targeted macroeconomic policies to promote stable growth.

Economists at Morgan Stanley have even forecast that China's economy will grow by 5.7% this year, accounting for about 40% of global economic growth.

Hou Yang, chairman and CEO of Microsoft Greater China, said multinationals are joining policymakers in hoping that measures announced at the two sessions will effectively reboot China's economic development dynamics, both internal and external.

Microsoft has unveiled a number of initiatives and plans to recruit more talent to accelerate the development of its local ecosystem partners and better surf the country's digital transformation wave, especially in manufacturing, healthcare, automotive and retail, Hou said.

"With the recent policy direction, as well as the enduring resilience and vitality of China's economy, multinational companies are once again evaluating opportunities to invest in and start businesses in the country."

That sentiment is in line with the latest data. Foreign direct investment on the Chinese mainland, in terms of actual use, rose 6% year-on-year to 268.44 billion yuan ($39.05 billion) in the first two months of this year, the Ministry of Commerce said.

China's pledge to accelerate the modernization of its industrial system is also encouraging foreign companies to increase their activities in the world's largest manufacturing powerhouse.

Jason Juang, managing director of HP Greater China, said: "HP has been in China for 40 years. We were the first U.S.-based company to establish a high-tech joint venture here. Looking forward, China's growing market, rapid technological development and advancing industry are paving the way for long-term sustainable growth.

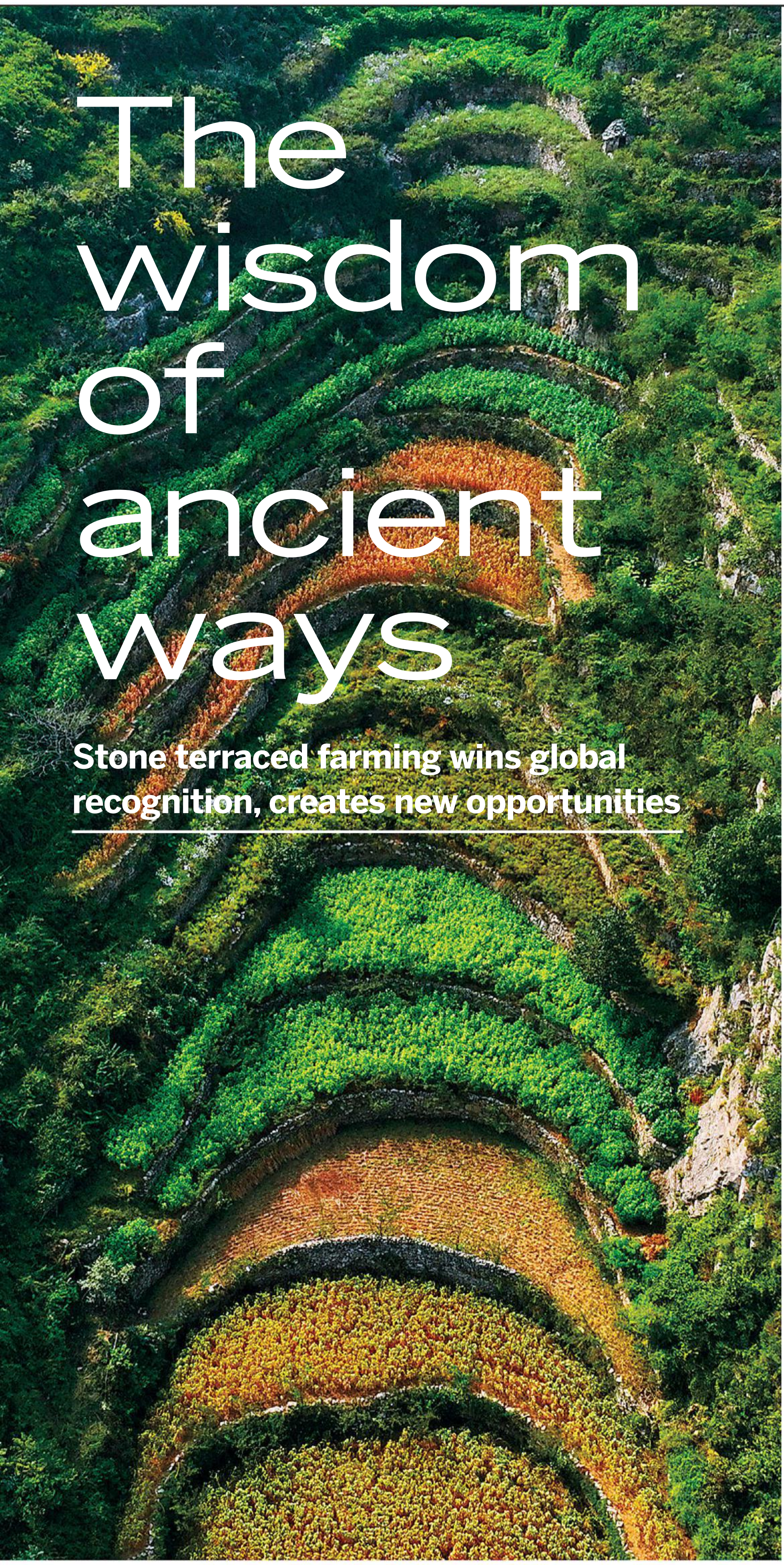
"China is a very important part of our supply chain, and it will continue to be for the foreseeable future. We will continue to increase investment in China and deepen cooperation with local partners."

Denis Depoux, global managing director of the consultancy Roland Berger, said that China's industrial and supply chains have improved significantly as domestic and foreign companies invested heavily in modernizing their local production systems.

"China has demonstrated its innovation capability and is leapfrogging in areas like the electric vehicle chain, from batteries to charging infrastructure, photovoltaic panels, wind turbines, nuclear and telecommunications equipment," Depoux said.

Yu Feng, president of Honeywell China, said this year's Government Work Report emphasized that China will deepen its efforts to attract more foreign investment and ensure national treatment and improve services for foreign-funded companies.

"This will give new impetus to the continuing growth of foreign-funded companies in China, including Honeywell," Yu said. "We have great confidence in both China's high-quality development and Honeywell's business in China."



The wisdom of ancient ways

Stone terraced farming wins global recognition, creates new opportunities



Top: An aerial photo shows dryland stone terraces in Shexian county, Hebei province. The county's terraced system of agriculture encompasses time-honored practices that use the land in a sustainable way. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Left: A farmer in Shexian levels soil with the help of his donkey on Feb. 28. Donkeys play a vital role in the county's 700-year-old mountain farming system. WANG HAORAN / CHINA DAILY

Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

BY ALEXIS HOOI

Like many of his fellow villagers, Cao Tinghuai celebrates his donkey's birthday each year to thank it for helping him in the fields.

"The donkey is a very important part of our lives, like a family member. So I treat it to traditional homemade wheat flour noodles for its hard work of carrying our loads and tilling the land," said Cao, 67, a farmer. The donkey is 20 years old.

In Shexian county of Hebei province, donkeys play a vital role in a 700-year-old mountain farming system that has gained global recognition for sustainable practices combining tradition and innovation.

Last May, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations included the dryland stone terraced system in Shexian on its Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems list, recognizing its crucial role in soil, water and biodiversity conservation through a complex ecosystem that provides rich food varieties and sustains livelihoods.

Shexian's rain-fed network of stone-ridge terraces, which is within a heritage site of more than 77 square miles in a dry, harsh mountainous area, is the only one of its kind in North China.

The local people, proud of their rich agricultural heritage and achievements, are now poised to make the most of new growth opportunities such as e-commerce and green tourism.

He Xianlin, an agricultural specialist who had a role in the system's inclusion on the UN list, said that pieces of stone were put together in ancient times to form the terraces, adding that it would take 600 people a year to create about 7,210 square feet of such farmland.

"With the storage of precious rainwater in stone cellars for farming, coupled with planting crops suitable for the local climate and using donkey manure as organic fertilizer, the dryland terraces help us tap into the little land and resources we have in a sustainable way," he said.

The FAO says Shexian's farming system "bears important significance to the promotion of civilized ecological development in the heritage site, not only reducing the occurrence of natural disasters such as soil erosion, landslides and debris flow, but also providing a quality environment to the locals for daily life and economic production".

The dryland system is "extremely rich" in agri-biodiversity and has formed "distinct landscape features along with forests and shrubs on the mountain peaks, as well as villages and rivers or river beaches in the valleys", the FAO said.

Wang Haifei, director of the agricultural technology promotion department of Shexian county's agriculture bureau, said that efforts to preserve, protect and promote the area's resources for future generations include a seed bank for 170 types of plants.

"Studies and experience have shown that traditional crops and diverse varieties offer better nutritional value. Our aim is to showcase the green gems of our land successfully preserved through our farming system and act as a platform for agricultural exchanges and research at home and abroad."

In the village of Wangjinzhuang in the county, Wang Hulin, an e-commerce entrepreneur, is at the forefront of young people taking advantage of new opportunities presented by Shexian's green development.

Shexian products such as millet and Chinese prickly ash greatly appeal to Wang, so he set up an e-commerce logistics company in 2015.

"Our customers from across the country and even in Europe and Southeast Asia realize the natural, sustainable strengths of our produce," he said.

Wang Linding, a Wangjinzhuang village official, said Shexian's agricultural advantages are significant in passing down the traditional values of hard work, frugality, efficiency and perseverance.

"We have improved infrastructure like roads and amenities such as tourist lodging to showcase our stone terraces and centuries-old stone houses and streets. We hope more visitors, especially young people and students, can experience how respect for our heritage, land and environment has reaped real rewards."

Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

5 ways to craft the perfect apology

BY ANGELA HAUPT

APOLOGIZING IS HOW WE COEXIST AS IMPERFECT BEINGS. YET FEW OF US KNOW HOW TO DO IT well—and not defensively. "We immediately turn to excuses, justifications, reasons why the victim provoked us," says Karina Schumann, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Pittsburgh who has researched the barriers to apologizing. Just as often, apologies don't happen at all out of fear that they'll be uncomfortable or ineffective. But sincere apologies bring a host of benefits to the person delivering the message and the one receiving it. They help solidify relationships and mend trust, both of which can lower stress and improve mental health. Research has found that those receiving apologies can experience improvements in blood pressure and heart rate, as well as increased activation of empathy-related brain regions that set the stage for forgiveness and reconciliation. If you're ready for your mea culpa moment, here are five keys to apologizing well.



1. Don't rush into it

Apologies are better late than early, says Cindy Frantz, a social psychologist at Oberlin College who has researched how timing influences apology effectiveness. "What we found is that there can be a temptation to offer an apology quickly," she says. "It's an effort to shut the whole incident down and move on. And that benefits the perpetrator, but it doesn't meet the needs of the victim." You can't deliver an effective apology until the injured party believes that **you fully understand what you did wrong,** she says. "If the apology comes before that, it's not going to be seen as sincere."



2. Start with specific words

Use the words *I'm sorry* or *I apologize.* Opting instead for phrases like *I regret* or *I feel bad about what happened* often results in nonapologies, which "have the vague contours of an apology, but don't actually get there," says Marjorie Ingall, co-author of the new book *Sorry, Sorry, Sorry: The Case for Good Apologies.* (See: the classic "sorry if you were offended" or "sorry, but ..." approaches.) Plus, saying you regret something puts the focus on you and your emotions, when it needs to center squarely on the wronged person's feelings.



3. Accept responsibility

Why should you apologize if you're both at fault? That's exactly the question many people struggle with, Schumann says—and certainly, there often is dual responsibility. "But I like to encourage people to really **focus on taking responsibility** for the parts of the conflict that they're responsible for," she says. Avoid the urge to phrase it as "I'm sorry I did this, but you also did that." The inclination to do so is "normal, because we want to contextualize our behavior and call attention to the fact that we're also hurt," she says. But save it for later on in the conversation.



4. Be clear about how you plan to repair things

One of the core elements of an apology is making reparations. Sometimes, Schumann says, that will be possible in a direct way: You broke their favorite wineglass? Buy them a new one. Spilled coffee on their new dress? Pay for the dry cleaning.

If that's not feasible, **consider more symbolic forms of repair.** For example, if you hurt someone's feelings with a critical comment, make it clear that you misspoke. "Sometimes you can't repair what's happened, but you can think about the relationship moving forward," she says. "How can you communicate a promise to behave better?" It's important for the other person "to hear that this is not going to continue ... and they can trust you to improve your behavior in the future."



5. Don't expect forgiveness

An apology is a starting point. Particularly with severe offenses, **the person wronged will often need time and space to heal,** and it's important not to pressure them. It can be tempting to follow up with something like "What's wrong? I apologized—how long are you going to hold onto this?" Instead, Schumann suggests checking in like this: "I understand this isn't going to fix everything, and I want to continue to do whatever I can to make this right by you. I hope that even if you're not ready to forgive me, you're open to working with me to get us to a point where we can move forward."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN FOR TIME


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WORLD

Judicial-overhaul plan tears Israel asunder

FIVE TIMES IN LESS THAN FOUR years, Israelis voted in elections that doubled as referendums on one man: Benjamin Netanyahu has served as Prime Minister even longer than David Ben-Gurion, under whose 15-year tenure Israel was established as a state. That state now approaches its 76th year in extraordinary internal upheaval.

While on trial for corruption charges that he denies, Netanyahu has endeavored to pass legislation that would weaken Israel's judiciary. The effort has provoked massive street protests, strikes, and so many vows by military reservists to stand down that Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, citing readiness concerns, called for a vote on the proposed law to be suspended. Instead, Netanyahu fired him. A day later, on March 27, as flights were canceled at Ben Gurion International amid unions' vows to "shut down" the nation, the Prime Minister announced the vote would be postponed until summer.

Endorsing the delay was Netanyahu's most crucial partner, Itamar Ben-Gvir, whose Jewish Power party is among the fringe right-wing factions that provided the winning margin in the latest election. So radical that he was not allowed to serve in the Israeli military, Ben-Gvir, whom Netanyahu named National Security Minister, said he agreed to delay the vote in exchange for the possibility of creating a national guard that would report directly to him. —KARL VICK

Protests in Tel Aviv on March 26, the night before Netanyahu announced the judiciary-bill vote would be postponed

PHOTOGRAPH BY OHAD ZWIGENBERG/AP

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The View

EDUCATION

THE POINT OF COLLEGE

BY JENNY ANDERSON

Soon after the 2008–9 financial crash tanked the economy, Americans' unflagging faith in higher education started to falter. By 2011, more than half of college graduates were un- or underemployed. The economy rebounded and the conversation faded, only to be revived again by the epic fallout from the pandemic. This time, the college degree's comeuppance has been more profound. ▶

INSIDE

POLITICAL AFTERSHOCKS IN TURKEY ELECTION

A WARMING PLANET BRINGS BACTERIA TO BEACHES

WORKING THROUGH GRIEF AFTER LOSING A FATHER



Graduation at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on May 8

CORNELL WATSON—REDUX

In 2019, Americans ranked "preparing for college" 10th on a survey conducted by Populace, a nonpartisan think tank, which asks respondents every year to rank answers to the question "What is the purpose of education?" In 2022, respondents ranked it 47th out of 57 items.

"The value proposition of college may not be what it once was," says Todd Rose, co-founder of Populace. He's clear that the data say not that it's not valuable, but rather that a prioritization of careers, and the pursuit of meaningful work, has surpassed it. People want it to be on the menu, but not to be the menu.

In 2009, 70% of recent high school graduates enrolled in college. In 2021, that figure was 61.8%, about where it was in 1994. What happened?

In the Populace study, the No. 1 purpose for the fourth year in a row was that "students develop practical tangible skills" such as managing one's finances and preparing meals. Other highly ranked measures included thinking critically to solve problems and make decisions, and demonstrating character. Being prepared for a career ranked sixth, up from 27th before the pandemic.

College is a necessary and valuable pathway for many careers; it can help learners expand their worlds and try out different identities. It can be transformative for individuals and families, especially first-generation college students. And it should be a foregone conclusion that primary and secondary education prepares all students for going to college.

But just as not everyone is cut out to be a pilot or a plumber, not everyone needs to spend two or four years studying. Students' interests vary widely, and their flourishing will require more recognition by all of us that human variation is a feature and not a bug. We got to 70% by way of social engineering, not choice. Campaigns extolling higher education as a way to work "smart" rather than "hard," with images of a dirty plumber next to a shiny college graduate, did not factor in the price of tuition.

There are also structural reasons underpinning our nation's newfound hunger for skills. An unusually tight labor market means employers are less inclined to require degrees. What started with tech has now spread to even the public sector, with Pennsylvania being the latest state to drop the college-degree requirement for most state jobs. The *Harvard Business Review* and the Burning Glass Institute estimated last year that 1.4 million jobs would be available to workers without college degrees in the next five years. Over two-thirds of Americans do not have a bachelor's degree, and many careers don't require it.

THE ALTERNATIVES now available for learning and training are far richer than they used to be. Before the pandemic, Coursera added about 2 million new learners a quarter; since the pandemic, that's increased to 5 million per quarter, with 113 million registered learners. That platform offers courses in everything from computer science to the secrets to happiness; skills and academic training for businesses to offer employees; and degrees.

The U.S.'s mistake was not in lionizing higher education, but in stigmatizing the alternatives. In Germany and Switzerland, one-half to nearly two-thirds of students pursue vocational education. Classroom learning does not end, but it changes.

If we want to focus on helping young people prepare for meaningful work, we don't need to declare the college degree dead. Colleges are excellent at developing many of the power skills (formerly known as "soft" skills) that employers want to hire for: analytical thinking, active learning, and complex problem solving. Graduates advance science and build knowledge. Data continue to show that college graduates earn more, are employed at higher rates, and tend to have a stronger sense of identity than those with only a high school diploma.

But the reality is that there are many ways to build identity and purpose, and many pathways to good earnings, especially when the fastest-growing jobs require specialized expertise (e.g., vaccine specialist, customer marketing manager).

What's an education for? If it's to prepare for meaningful work and meaningful lives, an arms race toward college, affordable for only the elite, is not a sustainable way forward. We should offer young people a broader set of opportunities and pathways to realize their future selves—including, but not extolling, the college degree.

Anderson, a journalist, is working on a book on the science of motivating teens

THE RISK REPORT BY IAN BREMMER

Erdogan faces a quake and a united opposition



TURKISH PRESIDENT Recep Tayyip Erdogan was mayor of Istanbul when a devastating earthquake hit Izmit in 1999, killing more than 17,000 people and devastating the country's economy. The government's shambolic response to the natural disaster allowed Erdogan to burnish his credentials as a capable and compassionate leader, setting the stage for his election as Premier in 2003.

Erdogan has maintained an iron rule ever since, outliving economic downturns, refugee crises, corruption scandals, protest movements, and even a coup attempt. But with the May 14 presidential and parliamentary elections coming up, two seismic shifts threaten Erdogan's grip on power.

Two seismic shifts threaten Erdogan's grip on power

The most obvious challenge to Erdogan's re-election is his botched response to the earthquakes that rocked Turkey and Syria in February, which claimed over 45,000 lives and internally displaced some 2 million people. The government's emergency rescue efforts were plagued by incompetence, and many Turkish citizens blame Erdogan's consolidation of power and populist policies for allowing shoddy construction to grow unchecked.

THE SECOND and perhaps more significant challenge to Erdogan's rule is a main opposition bloc that has united behind a joint presidential candidate, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, leader of the People's Republican Party (CHP). Kilicdaroglu has surprisingly managed to consolidate much of Turkey's notoriously fractious opposition under the umbrella of the Nation Alliance, which comprises social-democrat, center-right, right-wing, and Islamist parties, while also expanding support for the bloc.

TO HAVE A SHOT at beating Erdogan, Kilicdaroglu needs to win over the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) and its left-wing Labor and Freedom Alliance—the election's kingmakers—without alienating his biggest coalition partner, the Turkish nationalist and conservative Good Party (IP). This is a tricky balancing act, but one he's proving capable of pulling off.

Recent polls show Kilicdaroglu leading the President, although neither candidate is likely to attain a first-round win. As things stand, the HDP is also likely to hand the anti-Erdogan Nation Alliance a slim majority in parliament. Critically, an opposition victory in the parliamentary elections would boost Kilicdaroglu's chances in the second round of the presidential contest.

Of course, it's too early to say if Kilicdaroglu can hold the coalition together and sustain his momentum. And having already hollowed out most independent checks on his power, Erdogan will use any means at his disposal to tilt the scales in his favor.

Even if fear tactics and repression help him secure another term, Erdogan's political reign has never been on shakier footing. ◻





Warming U.S. waters are harboring more bacteria



Health Matters

By Alice Park

SENIOR HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

CLIMATE EXPERTS HAVE LONG warned about the many ways a warming planet can negatively affect human health. Now that global temperatures are predicted to increase by 1.5°C by the 2030s, that risk is becoming increasingly real.

One long-held prediction that appears to be coming true—according to the results of a study recently published in *Nature Scientific Reports*—is how **climate change might expand concentrations of bacteria that thrive and spread through warm sea waters and cause an infection with a particularly high fatality rate.**

Vibrio vulnificus flourishes in salty or brackish waters above 68°F. Infections are currently rare in the U.S., but that's likely to change. Using 30 years of data on infections from the bacterium reported to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, scientists at the University of East Anglia in the U.K. found that *Vibrio vulnificus* is expanding from its historic Gulf Coast range, with more Northern states reporting infections as waters become warmer.

"We're seeing the core distribution of infections extending to areas that traditionally have very few and very rare cases," says Elizabeth Archer, a Ph.D. researcher in the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of East Anglia and lead author of the study. "But these areas are now coming into the main distribution of infections."

Based on the latest data on how much the world's water and air temperatures will rise, the scientists predict that by 2081, *Vibrio vulnificus* infections could reach every state along the U.S. East Coast. Currently, only about 80 cases are reported in the U.S. each year; by 2081, that could jump to 200 cases, the authors say.

Such a proliferation could have serious health consequences. *Vibrio vulnificus* kills approximately 20% of the healthy people it infects, and 50% of those with weakened immune systems. There is no strong evidence that antibiotics can control the infection, but doctors may prescribe them in some cases. People can get infected either by eating raw shellfish like oysters or by exposing small cuts or wounds to waters where the bacteria live, which can lead to serious skin infections.

> **'Everyone can get a *Vibrio vulnificus* infection.'**
>
> —IAIN LAKE, UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

Warming sea temperatures aren't the only reasons behind the rise of *Vibrio vulnificus*. Hotter air also draws more people to the coasts and bays, bringing them into closer contact with the bacteria.

"The bacteria are part of the natural marine environment, so I don't think we can eradicate it from the environment," says Archer. "It's more about mitigating infections by increasing awareness and improving education about the risk."

TO ALERT PEOPLE to the growing threat, monitoring systems are needed to track when concentrations of bacteria start to rise, similar to currently available pollen and pollution alerts. *Vibrio vulnificus* is so sensitive to temperature changes that concentrations could bloom after even a day of warmer water, so consistent monitoring and alerts are critical, says Iain Lake, professor of environmental epidemiology at University of East Anglia and senior author of the paper.

Lake says the expansion of *Vibrio vulnificus* is concerning for public health since the bacteria are now invading waters closer to heavily populated areas, such as New York and Philadelphia. "Everyone can get a *Vibrio vulnificus* infection," he says. "But the more interaction there is between warmer waters and people, the more the bacteria can move into populations such as the elderly and those with other health conditions, who are more vulnerable to infections."

For more health news, sign up for Health Matters at **time.com/health-matters**

SPENCER PLATT—GETTY IMAGES



The Space Brief

By Jeffrey Kluger

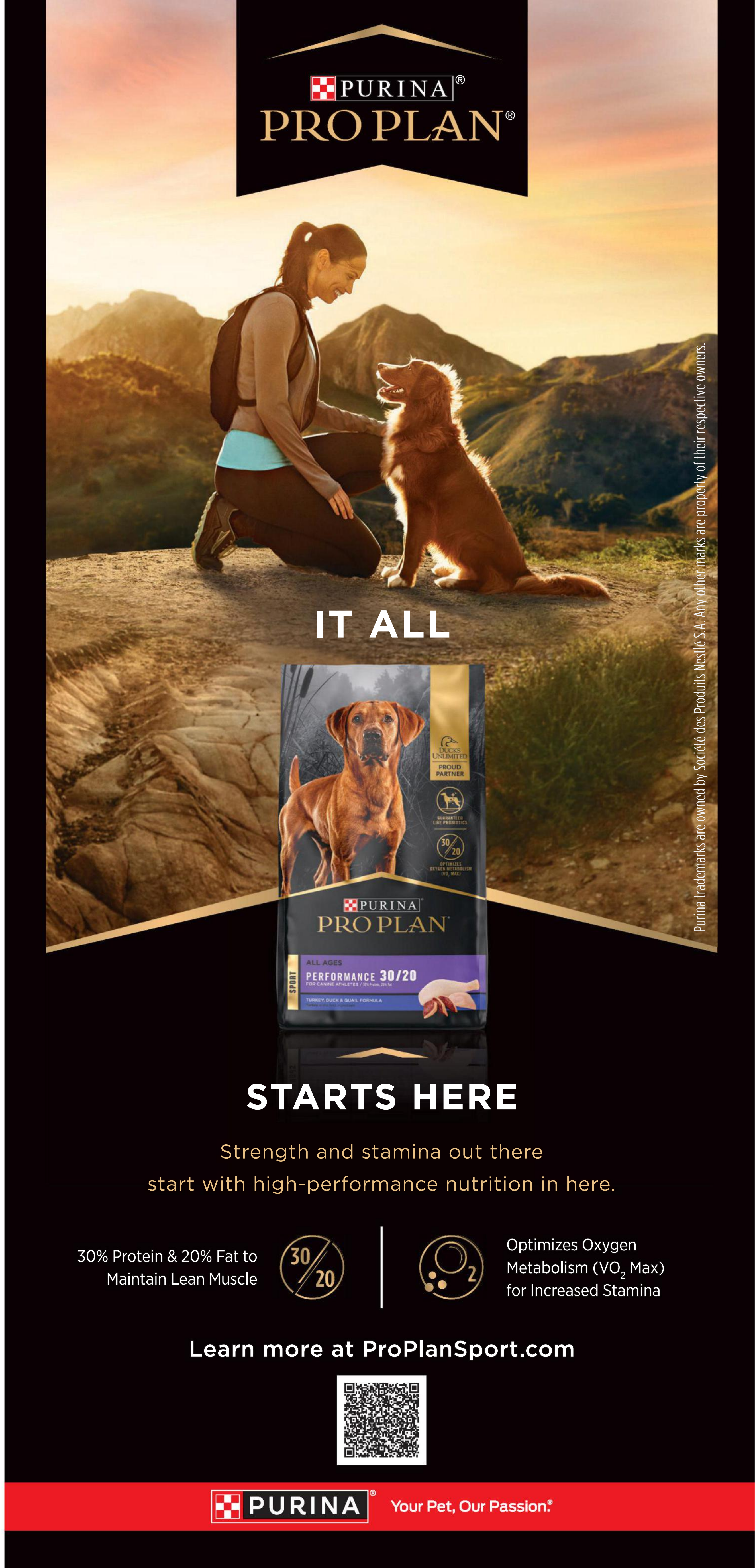
EDITOR AT LARGE

The comet known as Oumuamua (Hawaiian for “visitor from afar”) sailed through our solar system in 2017, and right away made news. Its small size—barely a quarter-mile long—and strange, elongated shape made it an odd cosmic spectacle. What’s more, its trajectory indicated that it came from outside our solar system, making it the **first known interstellar object to visit our corner of space.** And there was one other thing about Oumuamua that caught astronomers’ eyes: it sped up when it was leaving the solar system, far more than ordinary comets do when they’re flung away by the sun’s gravity. That led to some wild speculation that Oumuamua might be an alien vehicle buzzing our solar system.

Now, a new paper in *Nature* explains the acceleration, and alas, no aliens are involved. Instead, the researchers concluded, water ice inside the comet was cold enough when it was in deep space that it entered what’s known as an amorphous state—with Swiss-cheese-like pockets in it. Cosmic rays caused some of the H_2O in the water ice to break down, and gaseous hydrogen filled the pockets.

When the comet entered our solar system, the sun warmed the comet enough for the ice to resume its normal crystalline state, squeezing the pockets shut and causing the hydrogen to exit the comet in powerful plumes. That then propelled Oumuamua enough to explain its previously mysterious acceleration. That answer is not as exciting as the extraterrestrial one, but it has the benefit of being good, solid science. Meanwhile, the hunt for E.T. goes on.

For more of the latest out-of-this-world news, visit **time.com/science**



SOCIETY

Working through grief after losing my father

BY NICOLE CHUNG



AFTER MY FATHER DIES, I BECOME, FOR A time, someone I do not recognize. Entire weeks are all but lost to me, scooped out of my once airtight memory. Our rental term ends two months after the funeral, and when we move into another house, I hardly remember packing or unpacking.

I don't know how to ask for leave from my job. I tell myself that I can't afford to take unpaid time off anyway. The truth is that I have always been able to work, and now I learn that grief is no hindrance to my productivity. I bank on this, even feel a kind of twisted pride in it. It doesn't matter to me whether I take care of myself, because I do not deserve the care. All my parents wanted was to spend more time with us, to see us more than once a year or every other year, and I never found a way to make it happen, and now my father is dead. When other people—my husband, my friends—try to tell me that I am not at fault, I barely hear them. Punishing myself, keeping myself in as much pain as possible, seems like something a good daughter should do if it is too late for her to do anything else.

There is a flurry of activity in the run-up to the publication of my first book. My publisher sends me to conferences, schedules readings and interviews. I am grateful, and frankly surprised, to be getting any attention at all, and so of course I tell everyone that I am more than ready to do my part, to help the book succeed. I know how important it is to my career, and I feel enormous pressure not to let down any of the people who are working so hard on it. I want it to have a fighting chance, too, because it is a book in which my father still lives.

When I stop working, it's not to rest but to head to a soccer game or swimming lesson, or plan a Girl Scout meeting, or chaperone a school field trip. I treat myself like a machine, which makes it easy for the people I work and volunteer with to see and treat me that way too. "It's been hard," I say with a shrug, when asked how I'm doing, "but I'm hanging in there." One day, my older child calls me out on my usual choice of words.

"How come you always tell people that you're 'hanging in there'?" she asks.

Well, I think, a bit defensively, *because I am.* Am I not still doing what needs to be done: getting up every morning and going to work, taking care of my family, saying yes to anything anyone asks me to do? I haven't dropped a single ball at work. My publishing team has thanked me for my promptness in replying to their emails, for being *so great to work with.* I am an expert at grieving under capitalism. Watch and learn.

All the while, I keep daydreaming about walking into traffic.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental-health crisis, call or text 988. In emergencies, call 911 or seek care from a local hospital or mental-health provider

FROM THE MOMENT the thought pushes its way into my grief-muddled brain, I know that I could never act on it. It's not that I want to hurt myself—it's that I cannot seem to work up any remorse when I think about no longer being alive. Nor does the thought frighten me, as it always did before. *What if you didn't have to feel this way anymore?* my mind proposes, in moments that are deceptively calm, moments when I am not sobbing in the shower or screaming in my car because I cannot scream at home. *What if the pain could just end?*

As a child, I knew that I was not permitted to indulge in the hyperbolic or sarcastic statements other kids made about wanting to die, because my father would erupt. Toward the end of sixth grade, my teacher had everyone in my class write a fake will; my most charitable reading is that the exercise might have been intended to help us identify the things that were most important to us as we moved from elementary into middle school, symbolically leaving our childhoods behind. Most of my classmates made light of the task—*I hereby bequeath my Game Boy to my little brother, because he always*



ILLUSTRATION BY CHIARA DATTOLA FOR TIME

steals it anyway—but I remember little of what I wrote in my will, only my father's fury over the assignment. "You're 12 years old!" he yelled. He threatened to call my teacher. And then all the fight went out of him, his voice numb as he told me about being 21 years old and witnessing the death of his favorite cousin. The two of them had shared an apartment in a Cleveland high-rise, and one night my father came home to find him about to jump from their window. He pleaded with him, tried to stop him, but his cousin leaped before he could reach him. Dad had always blamed himself.

It takes me months, after his death, to realize that I am not *fine,* or *hanging in there.* I go to see my doctor for a long-overdue physical and break down in the exam room, sobbing as she hands me one flimsy tissue after another. I leave with a referral to a counseling practice, but manage to find one closer to my house, close enough to walk, because I know I'll come up with a million reasons to reschedule or cancel otherwise.

During one early session, my therapist, the first Asian American therapist I've ever worked with, asks me if I know what has kept me from harming myself as I flounder in grief. I don't even have to think about the answer. "My family," I say. My children, who have no idea how dark my thoughts have become. My husband, who keeps our household afloat on days when I cannot manage anything beyond the workday. My sister, who faithfully checks on me every week. My mother, whom I text and call so often it probably annoys her. "The people I love still need me."

'How come you always tell people you're "hanging in there"?' my older child asks

"And you still need them," she says. "You don't want to leave them."

I feel the truth of these words in my bones, try to keep them close.

SLOWLY, I FIND my footing again. When I catch myself faltering, fumbling in the dark for a thread to follow back to the person I was before, the thing that often keeps me from despair is talking with my mother. Sometimes I wish that she would voice some concrete need, ask me to do something for her, but she seems to be taking care of herself—it occurs to me that this might be easier than taking care of both herself and Dad, as much as she misses him. I can sense her sorrow and restlessness, always, but there is a driving, don't-quit vitality about her, even in mourning.

One day, she tells me she has decided to get rid of Dad's lift chair, and one of their old end tables. *I never liked that table, Dad did. I am learning that I can make decisions based on what I want—that if I don't like something, I can just make a change.* Another day, we discuss whether she might get a dog; it has been a long time since she had one in the house. She sheepishly tells me she used some of the money I gave her to buy new miniblinds. "That's perfect!" I say. I don't care how she spends it, as long as it's useful.

It's hard for either of us to imagine her remarrying. But as she begins to plan the next stage of her life without my father, I realize that I can picture her living out her own days in peace—and, more important, it seems she can as well. My heart lifts when she tells me that she is planning a trip to Greece with two of her friends from church, intending to use what's left of my father's life-insurance payout to make her first-ever trip outside the country. They will visit monasteries and holy sites, see the sights, and swim in the sea; the trip is to be part pilgrimage, part escape.

After that adventure, I think, I will help her consider what she wants her new life to look like. I can be her sounding board, if nothing else. I know her ties to Oregon are strong after four decades there, but maybe someday she'll decide that she wants to move closer to us on the East Coast. Or maybe we will relocate to the Northwest and provide more support to her once our kids are done with school. There's no need to figure everything out now, I tell myself. Dad has been gone only a matter of months. We have time. Mom has time.

I feel certain she has never doubted, for a second, that living is worth it.

Chung is a TIME contributor and the author of A Living Remedy, *from which this essay was adapted*

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

How **Bad Bunny** bent global pop culture to his will—by refusing to compromise on anything

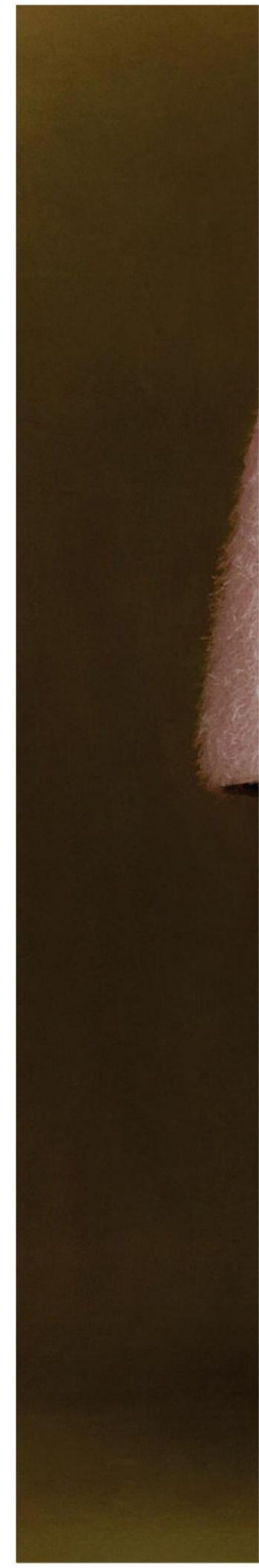
By Andrew R. Chow and Mariah Espada

Photographs by Elliot & Erick Jiménez for TIME

▸

BAD BUNNY PHOTOGRAPHED IN LOS ANGELES ON MARCH 7





In 40 minutes, the former grocery bagger from Puerto Rico will try on outfits worth thousands for the cover of this magazine.

In 12 hours, he will be photographed embracing the world's highest-paid supermodel. In one month, he will be staring out onto a sea of 125,000 superfans from the heights of Coachella's main stage.

But right now, Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, who also goes by Bad Bunny, is slouched almost completely horizontally on a green-room couch in downtown Los Angeles, thinking about being with his parents back home in Puerto Rico.

"Outside of that house, perhaps the world is listening and talking about me," he murmurs in Spanish. "But in that house, everything is the same. Nothing has changed. It's beautiful for me to go there and they still look at me with the eyes of, 'Come here, Benito Antonio. The baby. The son.'"

Bad Bunny wants to be the biggest artist in the world—and he is. Last year, his fifth solo studio album, *Un Verano Sin Ti,* was *Billboard*'s top-performing album of the year, beating out Taylor Swift and Harry Styles. He broke the all-time record for tour revenue in a calendar year—with $435 million earned—and was Spotify's most streamed artist for the third year in a row. But Bad Bunny also wants to just be Benito; to do whatever he wants, or *hace lo que le da la gana,* as he named his sophomore album. And until this point, it is exactly this mentality that has brought him unprecedented success. Where other musicians reaching for his level of stardom have hidden certain parts of themselves, Benito has refused to compromise: on the language he sings in; the political stances he assumes; the dresses and nail polish he wears.

Bad Bunny is perhaps the world's first reverse crossover artist, whose success comes from a refusal to cater to the mainstream. His stubborn originality, independence, and fiercely local lens have made him a radically new kind of global pop star, etching pathways to success that completely bypass New York or Hollywood industry gatekeepers.

But the further Benito ascends into the stratosphere, the more the expectations of his growing fandom threaten to exceed what his whims can deliver. His unequaled stature means he is often asked to speak for an entire region, a responsibility that he alternately embraces and chafes at. During the course of our conversation, he dances around political questions and refers to himself as a *chamaquito*—a little boy.

Seven years into his career, Benito, 29, is a legitimate heir to Frank Sinatra, Michael Jackson, or Beyoncé. How he navigates this next fraught period could determine how close he can come to meeting the near impossible expectations placed on him by his fans, his homeland, an exacting industry—and himself.

"I always say that if a thousand people listened to me and I performed once a month at a little place, just with that I would be happy," he says in his deep baritone and distinctly Puerto Rican inflection. "But the hunger and the passion that I have for this is impossible, because I always want to give more and more and more."

IN 2022, BAD BUNNY had the type of pantheon year that even other pop superstars dream about. *Un Verano Sin Ti* topped the *Billboard* charts for 13 nonconsecutive weeks, with the least played song on the record racking up 190 million Spotify streams. In November, *Un Verano Sin Ti* became the first entirely Spanish-language album to receive a Grammy nomination for Album of the Year.

Benito's success starts with his inimitable singing voice, which is malleable enough to be imbued either with cutthroat swagger or pathos. He's a master aural chemist, melding together decades of Latin music into cutting-edge mixes that resonate at the club, on the beach, or at home on a lazy Sunday afternoon. And he creates at a startlingly fast pace. "I'll send him an idea and tomorrow night, there are vocals in an email that don't need any adjustments," the producer Tainy, who is one of his main collaborators, tells TIME.

Benito has achieved all of this without releasing a single song in English, or making any real attempt to cross over. Other Latin artists have scored megahits in Spanish: Ritchie Valens' "La Bamba" back in 1958, Los Del Río's 1993 hit "Macarena," Luis Fonsi's "Despacito" in 2017. But U.S. interest has ebbed and flowed, with subgenres like Latin pop and reggaeton—a genre that blends Jamaican and Latin musical influences with hip-hop elements—dismissed by industry insiders as fads.



that have each surpassed a billion views on YouTube.

You don't accomplish all this without being relentlessly motivated. When asked whether he cares about maintaining his position at the top, he says, "I always say no, but I think I lie. Because if there is someone who made a *cabrona* song, I am going to make a more *cabrona* song." The word *cabrón,* which is a stronger vulgarity in some cases, often signifies "badass" in Puerto Rican slang.

All this has unfolded against the streaming boom, which has given fans direct access to regional music. Executives are now focused on sheer streaming numbers as opposed to radio spins, and Latin music is growing faster than any other genre in the U.S. No one else is streamed more than Bad Bunny. He has proved to the industry that hits don't need to be manufactured by Max Martin's assembly line: they can be freestyled on an island 3,000 miles away from Los Angeles.

WHILE ACCEPTING A GRAMMY onstage in February, Benito dedicated his trophy to Puerto Rico, where his journey began. He grew up the oldest of three brothers in Almirante Sur, a rural area in Vega Baja, a 45-minute drive from San Juan. His parents, a truck driver and a teacher, went through both easy and "difficult times to bring us food," he says. All the while, they filled their Catholic household with salsa and merengue music from stars like Héctor Lavoe and Elvis Crespo.

Benito's rise has paralleled a particularly tumultuous period in Puerto Rican history. In 2016, the same year he released his first single, Congress enacted the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA) in an effort to restructure the island's estimated $70 billion in debt. The federal law resulted in austerity measures that have cut back on public services for the island, which has one of the highest poverty rates in the U.S. Puerto Rico was under Spanish colonial rule for 400 years before transitioning into a fraught, century-long commonwealth relationship with the U.S., which has been marked by such indignities as coerced sterilization. Debates surrounding statehood have been in limbo since the population first voted on a status referendum over 50 years ago.

During Hurricane Maria in 2017, one of the deadliest natural disasters and the largest blackout in U.S. history, Benito's parents lost power for months. In 2018, after President Trump visited the island and threw paper towels into a crowd, Benito declared on *The Tonight Show* that "more than 3,000 people died and Trump is still in denial." In 2019, he put his tour on hold to join protests in San Juan calling for the removal of Governor Ricardo Rosselló.

Benito is increasingly careful with his words on politics, conscious that being the biggest Puerto Rican star in the world comes with the ability to shift public discourse. Whereas a 2019 Instagram post encouraging Puerto Ricans to join him in protest was direct, his comments today are more equivocal. "I think the [U.S.] government has failed Puerto Rico," he says, before backtracking slightly. "It's failed the United States. Equally, Puerto Rico has failed Puerto Rico. I believe that all governments have failed their country at some point."

His music is less inhibited. His 2022 song "El Apagón" rails against Puerto Rico's current Governor Pedro Pierluisi and the constant power

Bad Bunny grew up in the midst of reggaeton's first mainstream moment. San Juan, P.R., and artists like Daddy Yankee and Ivy Queen played crucial roles in the genre's evolution in the '90s and '00s. As a teenager, Benito listened to reggaeton and other forms of Latin music, and anointed himself Bad Bunny based on a childhood photo taken of him in a bunny costume. He started recording in his room and uploading songs to Soundcloud, and his first hit, "Diles," blew up when he was 21. Five critically acclaimed and commercially successful solo albums followed, along with a Super Bowl performance with Shakira and 10 music videos

outages since its electrical grid was privatized. Instead of a traditional music video, Benito released a short documentary about the displacement that has resulted from Act 60, a law that offers tax incentives to foreigners.

Benito makes music that reflects the multifaceted experience of life itself, moving within a few verses from lyrics about sex to Puerto Rico's lack of infrastructure. He isn't interested in making reggaeton that's only *perreo* (dance-party tracks), nor is he trying to make politically correct records for an older, more conservative, and vulgarity-averse Latino demographic.

His songs and acts of political resistance are widely celebrated—and are now even the subject of at least one college class. But his ascendance has not come without criticism. In 2020, many on social media called out him and other *urbano* artists for failing to engage in conversations about anti-Blackness following the murder of George Floyd, especially given reggaeton's history of rewarding white-presenting artists while neglecting its Black roots. Benito is white-presenting, but is often referred to as *jabao,* a Puerto Rican of mixed race.



▼ AFTER WINNING THE BEST MÚSICA URBANA ALBUM FOR *UN VERANO SIN TI* AT THE GRAMMYS IN FEBRUARY 2023



▶ AT A PROTEST AGAINST PUERTO RICO GOVERNOR ROSSELLÓ IN SAN JUAN ON JULY 17, 2019

When Benito is asked whether he believes race and colorism play a role in the success of a reggaeton artist, he responds, "Because I haven't seen it or lived it, I can't say. It'd be irresponsible of me to say yes. They asked me about if ['00s reggaeton superstar] Tego Calderón would've been bigger if he wasn't Black. But in my eyes, Tego Calderón is the biggest singer in the industry."

Music historian Katelina "Gata" Eccleston, who has long studied reggaeton and its racial elements, calls Benito a "great ambassador," and believes that no one artist should be held accountable for the industry's failures around colorism. Still, she says Benito's comments above show that "he still does not understand his positionality."

Benito is frustrated by how his political lyricism seems to necessitate his answering political questions on behalf of the millions of disparate residents of his home island. "That question could be a bit unfair because I simply do a song and then a responsibility so big falls on you," he says. "You're not going to ask Daddy Yankee something like that."

OVER THE PANDEMIC, Benito hunkered down in Puerto Rico. Now, he often finds himself in Los Angeles, which is where TIME meets him on a balmy March morning. He arrives in fashionable yet comfy clothes: baggy Balenciaga sweats and a yellow-trimmed Moncler puffer jacket covering a shirt of the Mexican pop icon Juan Gabriel. His accessories include Y2K-style sunglasses, a skull ring, mismatched heart earrings, blush-pink nails, and three layered gold chains.

Over the course of several hours, Benito speaks in hushed tones, at times raising his voice excitedly to punch home a point or jokingly insult a member of his posse sitting in the corner. Later on, he teases playing an unreleased song, reaching for his phone in jest.

Benito's attention to detail is apparent as he prepares for the photo shoot. Wearing a floor-length Willy Chavarria coat and a sizable white flower on his chest, he makes his way through piles of jewelry before adding a pearl necklace to his already well-adorned neck. "Beautiful. *Me gusta,*" he says in Spanglish as he looks in a mirror.

Los Angeles' appeal to Benito includes Hollywood, which he is keen to immerse himself in. He recently appeared in *Narcos: Mexico; Bullet Train* opposite Brad Pitt; and *Cassandro,* in which he plays a paramour to Gael García Bernal. "My first kiss for a movie and it was with a man," he says, laughing. "That's the penalty I get for being with so many women."

But he took the job seriously. "If you're acting, you're being someone you're not," he says. "So when they asked me for that, I said, 'Yes, I'm here for whatever you want.' I think it was very cool; I didn't feel uncomfortable."

Benito is part of a rising generation of male pop stars challenging stereotypical masculine ideals. He has kissed a male dancer onstage, appeared in drag, and declared that his heterosexuality does not define him. He used a 2020 appearance on *The Tonight Show* to call attention to the murder of a transgender woman, Alexa Negrón Luciano, in Puerto Rico. This month, he will receive GLAAD's Vanguard Award for his LGBTQ allyship.

Last year, Sony Pictures announced he would star in a Spider-Man spin-off, *El Muerto,* as Marvel's first Latino superhero. At the time, Benito said that the role was "perfect" for him, as he grew up watching wrestling and is an avid WWE fan. But during our interview, Benito feigned confusion when asked about the movie and said that no filming had yet taken place. Benito's publicist said that the movie was "at a standstill," and later clarified that it's "in development."

"Maybe they'll switch me out for Pedro Pascal," Benito says jokingly.

Benito's Hollywood dreams are sometimes dampened when he encounters a lack of understanding about his homeland: "If I hear something very ignorant about my country or my

GRAMMYS: JC OLIVERA—WIREIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES; PROTEST: DENNIS M. RIVERA PICHARDO—AP; CONCERT: GLADYS VEGA—GETTY IMAGES

ONSTAGE AT HIS "P FNK R" CONCERT AT HIRAM BITHORN STADIUM IN PUERTO RICO ON DEC. 10, 2021





culture, I always try to educate them, like 'No, it's not like that.'" At the Grammys in early February, his exuberant opening number was nearly overshadowed by the program's live captioning, which read "singing in non-English." "It was *porqueria* (crap)," Benito says dismissively.

He is currently preparing for his Coachella performances, which will take place on April 14 and 21 in Indio, Calif., and mark the first time a Latino artist has headlined the festival. Coachella has hosted massive stars, but the gig doesn't seem to faze him. "Am I supposed to feel something?" he asks incredulously. "I felt more pressure at the Hiram Bithorn [Stadium in Puerto Rico] than I feel for Coachella."

> 'The hunger and the passion that I have for this is impossible, because I always want to give more and more.'
>
> —BAD BUNNY

The bigger he gets, the more invasive his fans have become. In January, he was filmed throwing a fan's phone in a nearby body of water after she started to film them together. "If you're coming up like you're going to rob me, then yes, it'll bother me," he says. "Why do you want a picture with me? Because I'm the Statue of Liberty?"

Several hours after the interview, Benito ignites another firestorm when paparazzi photograph him embracing supermodel Kendall Jenner, a member of the Kardashian dynasty. Many Latino social media users treated this potential romance as a fundamental betrayal. Benito has often sung about his love for Latin women and culture, even dismissing the non-Latinos who want to participate in reggaeton culture or take advantage of Puerto Rican land as lacking *sazón* (flavor). "It ain't Benito no more, it's Ben," went a common refrain on social media.

Benito declined to comment on the dating rumors. But he says he feels less strongly about the *sazón* lyric than when he wrote it. "I was upset," he says. "But now that feeling has passed me. Our culture and music impacts people in other places. They want to try it and feel it. So why am I going to be bothered by that, if they do it with respect?"

Benito says that the "only reception" for his music he cares about is from Puerto Rican fans. But he also says he remains unbothered by his critics. "When I read comments that say, 'Bad Bunny now I'm not going to listen to your music,' that's fine," he says. "I'm not going to do something else for you to like it. There are plenty of artists, and perhaps you'll find someone you'll like."

AS MUCH AS BENITO purports to be carried downstream by his desires, he also acutely understands the fleeting nature of fame. "I release an album now and a week passes and 15 new albums have arrived," he says. "So to maintain yourself right there in the position at the top is way more difficult than before."

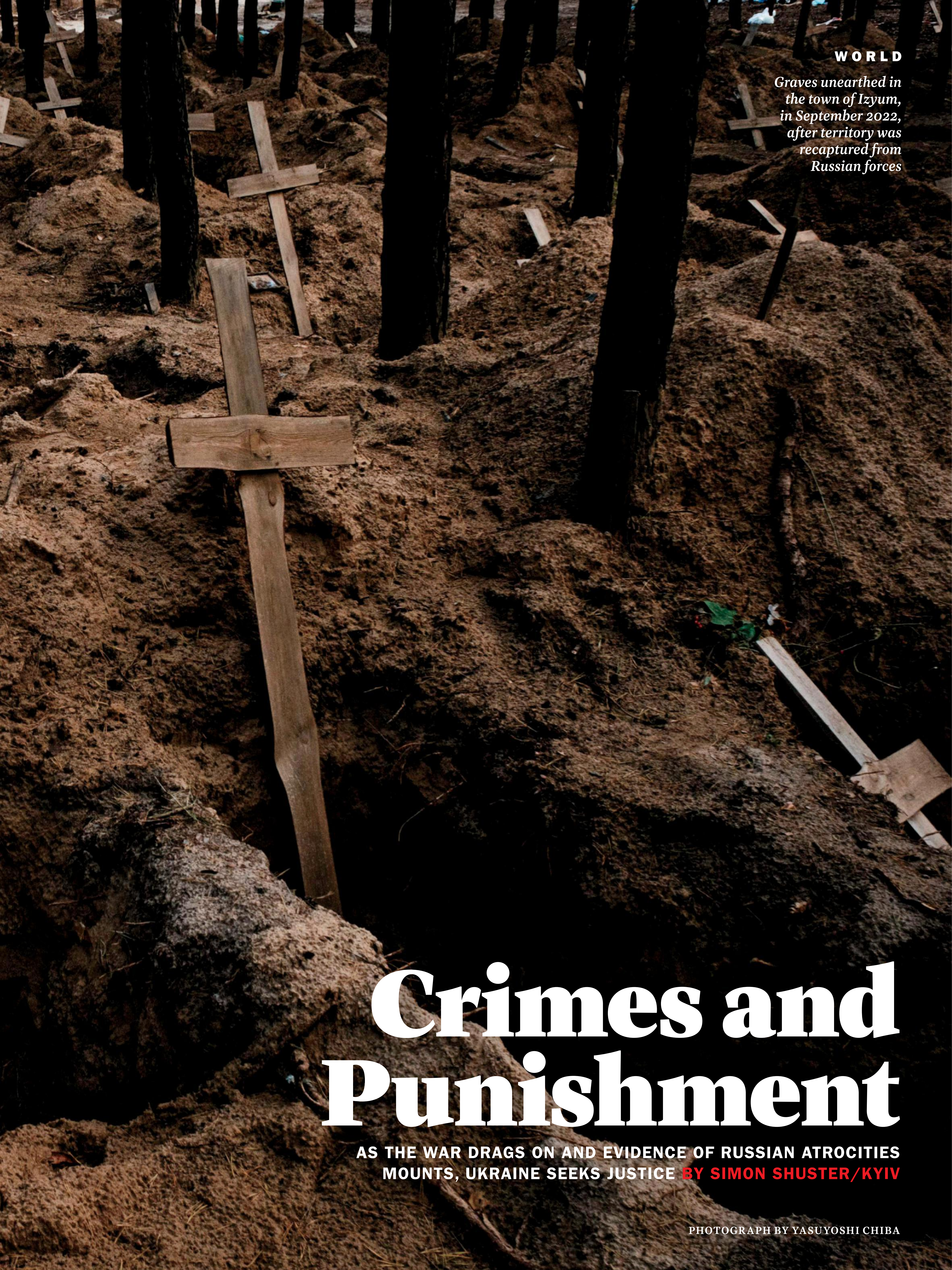
Bad Bunny doesn't have to change anything: he's already fulfilled the dreams of so many Puerto Ricans and flipped the music industry on its head. Musically, he will continue to do whatever he wants: while he decorated his studios with a tropical decor for *Un Verano Sin Ti,* he says that lately, his space embodies a '70s vintage vibe. He has continued to record music this year, he says, but without a specific deadline.

Yet because he loves being on top, he is realizing that some compromise may be necessary in order to stay there. This includes learning more English. "There's a lot of things that I'm losing, like opportunities, 'cause the language," he says in English. "I didn't care about [learning] English. But now, I think I care." He adds that any English-language song he writes will be on his own terms: "The day I feel like I need to do a song in English, I'll do it because I feel it."

The social media fallout of the Jenner photo reinforced how every one of his personal choices is scrutinized through a larger cultural lens. This is a heavy weight to bear for someone who, as much as he genuinely cares about his country, doesn't feel like an island's fate should fall on his shoulders alone.

"I am a *chamaquito,* and we have different preoccupations and desires to do one thing one day and the next not. One moment we go to the club to drink and smoke, and tomorrow I want to be chilling at home watching a movie. And then next I'll be thinking about my ex or a girl that I like," he says, sitting slightly more upright than when the interview began. "And then tomorrow I am bothered over something I think is an injustice. But then by night I go to eat tacos, they give me a bit of tequila, and I've forgotten." *—With reporting by* ISRAEL MELÉNDEZ AYALA





Graves unearthed in the town of Izyum, in September 2022, after territory was recaptured from Russian forces

Crimes and Punishment

AS THE WAR DRAGS ON AND EVIDENCE OF RUSSIAN ATROCITIES MOUNTS, UKRAINE SEEKS JUSTICE BY SIMON SHUSTER/KYIV

PHOTOGRAPH BY YASUYOSHI CHIBA



Smyrnov, a lawyer and aide to Zelensky, in his office in Kyiv

In the office of Andriy Smyrnov, the deputy head of Ukraine's presidential administration, the wanted posters spread across the desk serve as a kind of mission statement. They show the faces of five Russian officials, led by President Vladimir Putin, next to a list of the charges Ukraine has leveled against them: aggression, war crimes, crimes against humanity. "We had these printed as a reminder," Smyrnov says while pacing around his desk on the third floor of the presidential compound, one floor down from the chambers of his boss, President Volodymyr Zelensky. "There's no alternative to putting Putin on trial," he says.

The question is where, and under whose authority. As the top aide to Zelensky on judicial matters, Smyrnov, 42, has spent the past year charting a path to an improbable destination: a courtroom, somewhere, with Putin in the dock. Every step has been painstaking, with Ukraine's closest allies often blocking the way. But Smyrnov, who has no experience in international law, has made surprising progress. Last fall, he says, "nobody even wanted to talk to us about a tribunal. Now look at how quickly the civilized world is waking up."

On March 16, investigators working with the U.N. Human Rights Office reported that Russian forces had committed crimes against humanity, a rare rebuke from a U.N. body against a sitting member of the U.N. Security Council. The following day, the International Criminal Court in the Hague (ICC) issued a warrant for Putin's arrest, charging him in connection with another alleged war crime: the mass deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia. Less than two weeks after that, the U.S. set out a plan to put Putin on trial for the crime of aggression, which some scholars describe as the root of all war crimes.

None of these developments is likely to achieve justice as Zelensky, Smyrnov, and their team have envisioned it. The ICC's warrant will be toothless unless Putin travels to a country willing to arrest him, and the U.S. plan for an "internationalized national court" remains vague; some legal experts say it would be easy for Putin to sidestep or ignore. But it all feels like a breakthrough to Smyrnov and his colleagues. "When it came to creating a tribunal," he says, "there were a lot of issues on the agenda that seemed unattainable half a year ago. In reality, they were well within reach."

Before the invasion, Smyrnov's role in the presidential headquarters mostly involved pushing paper. He worked on judicial reforms and helped prepare documents for Zelensky's signature. A lot of that changed on the morning of Feb. 24, 2022, when Russian missiles began raining down on cities across Ukraine. Holed up in their bunker beneath the presidential compound, Zelensky and his aides realized that their judicial system could soon be hijacked. If the Russians seized control of the courts, they could begin issuing legal decisions that would undermine Zelensky's authority or legitimize the puppet government that Moscow wanted to install in his place.

To prevent that, Smyrnov rushed to the server room of a Kyiv courthouse and, with help from an officer of Ukraine's security services, broke through the door. Once inside, they unplugged the court's internal computer network—the judicial equivalent of blowing up a bridge to thwart the advance of enemy tanks. "In terms of separation of powers, that's probably not what you should do," he says, pulling up photos he took that day of the courthouse servers, their wires ripped out and dangling. "But these were extraordinary times."

By early April, the President's legal department shifted to a new challenge. The Russian military's retreat from the Kyiv region exposed gruesome atrocities in places they had occupied. The streets of Bucha, a suburb of the capital, were littered with the bodies of dozens of civilians; hundreds more were later found in mass graves around town. In the wake of that massacre, Zelensky's calls for justice intensified. "Accountability must be inevitable," he told the U.N. on April 5, 2022, the day after he saw the evidence of war crimes in Bucha for himself.

Under international law, the Security Council can create a tribunal to prosecute war crimes, as it did after the wars in Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the 1990s. But that would not work in the case of Ukraine, because Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, holds a veto over all its rulings. As they looked for an alternative, Smyrnov and his team found themselves studying the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals

PREVIOUS PAGES: AFP/GETTY IMAGES; SMYRNOV: ANTON SKYBA

and reviewing evidence from crime scenes and mass graves around Ukraine. "I used to get a kick out of horror movies," Smyrnov says. "But after some of the things I've seen, after some of the exhumation reports, any horror movie feels like a joke."

Ukrainian investigators have received nearly 80,000 reports of war crimes and opened thousands of cases against Russian military personnel accused of committing them. But when it comes to prosecuting Putin, Smyrnov and his team discovered, Ukrainian courts do not have the authority. It would take an internationally authorized tribunal to overcome the legal immunity Putin enjoys as a sitting head of state, says David Scheffer, a former U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes.

At first, the ICC in the Hague seemed like a logical venue. But unlike 123 other countries, Ukraine and Russia never ratified the treaty that created the ICC in 1998. Neither did the U.S. President Trump even sanctioned the ICC leadership in June 2020 for their attempts to investigate the use of torture in Afghanistan.

The Ukrainians decided to push instead for the creation of an ad hoc tribunal focused on holding Russia's leadership responsible for the crime of aggression, which the Rome Statute defines as a war crime. "In this whole gruesome story, the decision to start the war is the original crime," says Christian Wenaweser, Liechtenstein's ambassador to the U.N. "It's the crime of the leadership, the ones who ordered the invasion, and we need to have a mechanism to prosecute them for it."

But who would give authority to such a tribunal? Ukraine decided to seek it from the 193 member states of the U.N. General Assembly; unlike the 15-member Security Council, Russia holds no veto there. Through the spring and summer of 2022, Smyrnov and his colleagues appealed to dozens of foreign countries and international institutions for support. But the talks were often frustrating. Prosecuting the crime of aggression tends to appeal to its victims, like Ukraine, and to smaller countries like Liechtenstein, which does not have a military. The U.S. and other big powers see less advantage in letting foreign courts judge their decisions on when to make war.

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS, U.S. diplomats warned Ukrainian officials that a tribunal could hinder Washington's ability to reach Putin in an emergency—if, for instance, the war escalated into a nuclear standoff, two of the officials said. Others said that it could prolong the war by impeding peace talks. One European official even told his Ukrainian counterparts the tribunal could be fair and balanced only if it included a Russian judge.

Smyrnov found it hard to respond to such arguments without losing his temper. As the evidence of Russian atrocities piled up in agonizing detail, he often fell back on sarcasm. "Let's just write Putin a greeting card and say, 'Dude, you're awesome. We bow our heads. We won't judge you for your crimes of aggression,'" Smyrnov says between pulls on a vape, summarizing a point he has often made to foreign officials. "Or how about we stop being afraid," he says. "How about we team up and hold him accountable."

'In this whole gruesome story, the decision to start the war is the original crime.'

—U.N. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER OF LIECHTENSTEIN

By September, the effort reached what he calls "a psychological plateau." European institutions and parliamentary assemblies had backed the idea of a tribunal. But with heads of state, Smyrnov says, "we reached the limits of our ability to communicate." The lawyers asked Zelensky to step up the pressure, and he pushed harder for a tribunal in his talks with foreign leaders. As Ukraine made gains on the battlefield, the prospect of holding Russia to account became easier to imagine.

In January, the European Parliament voted 472 to 19 to support a tribunal's creation. The vote was symbolic, but it gave Kyiv hope that momentum might turn its way at the U.N. General Assembly, where Ukraine could count on only a few dozen votes. Russia's influence there was one obstacle. But support from the U.S. was also far from certain.

In December 2022, Congress authorized the U.S. to aid "investigations and prosecutions" related to the war in Ukraine. Yet the Pentagon raised objections, concerned about setting a precedent that could put U.S. officials in legal jeopardy. (A decision whether to give intelligence to the ICC for its case against Putin is due to come before President Biden soon, according to the New York *Times*.)

At the end of March, Smyrnov's goal of an ad hoc tribunal seemed to get a boost from the Biden Administration. In a speech on March 27, America's ambassador-at-large for global criminal justice, Beth Van Schaack, said the U.S. would endorse an "internationalized national court" that Ukraine could establish with support from the U.S. and its allies, not the U.N. "This kind of model," she said, would "demonstrate Ukraine's leadership in ensuring accountability for the crime of aggression."

To some legal scholars, the approach looked deeply flawed, as it would still allow Putin to claim immunity as a sitting head of state. "Unfortunately it plays into Putin's hands," says Scheffer, who held the same post as Van Schaack during the Clinton Administration. "Putin and his colleagues can ignore the prospect of prosecution for the crime of aggression." Skeptics view the move as an attempt by Washington to derail the prospect of a U.N.-authorized tribunal.

But Ukraine sees it as another step on the road to justice. A few months ago, Smyrnov says, the U.S. opposed any tribunal that would hold Russian leaders accountable. The Ukrainians have not given up on the hope of a resolution in the U.N. General Assembly that would empower a tribunal under international law, and they plan to keep rallying support for such a vote in the months ahead. "We've overcome our fear," Smyrnov says. "The rest should be easier." *—With reporting by* JULIA ZORTHIAN ◻

ENVIRONMENT

SAVING THE SEINE

Inside the radical effort to clean up the world's most romantic river

BY VIVIENNE WALT/PARIS



An aerial view of the Seine River winding through a smoggy Paris

PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURENT GRANDGUILLOT—REA/REDUX


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Parisians swim in the Seine near the Pont d'Iéna amid a heat wave in June 1946

FOR RESIDENTS OF SOUTHEAST PARIS, THE CONstruction vehicles rumbling back and forth behind the Austerlitz train station are a loud annoyance that has gone on for too many months. But for city officials—and countless Parisians, they hope—history is unfolding behind the cordoned-off area. After years of thwarted ambitions and vague promises, the French capital, officials say, is set to accomplish a rare feat for a major metropolis: making a once heavily polluted waterway fit for swimming again.

In February, city officials invited TIME to pass through the metal turnstile behind the cordon, and see up close the cleanup of the Seine—one of the world's most iconic rivers—which stretches for 481 miles, from Burgundy through Paris out to the sea in Normandy. Indeed, the river has defined Paris since it was founded by ancient Romans. It was along these riverbanks that merchants in the Middle Ages first set up, creating a settlement that finally dwarfed once bigger rivals like Lyon and Marseilles. And it was on the banks, too, that the world's finest architects constructed the Eiffel Tower, the Notre Dame Cathedral, and the Louvre and Orsay museums—stunning monuments that draw millions of visitors each year to sail down the narrow stretch of the Seine that cuts through the dead center of Paris. Officials are therefore keenly aware of the deeper significance of cleaning up the Seine, seeing it as a way of connecting the modern city to its oldest history. "The Seine," says Emmanuel Grégoire, deputy mayor of Paris in charge of urban planning, "is the reason why Paris was born."

Once the €1.4 billion ($1.5 billion) project is finished—by next spring, if all goes to plan—Parisians will be legally allowed to swim in the river for the first time in a century. (Authorities banned it in 1923 because of high levels of pollution.) "Swimming at the foot of the Eiffel Tower will be very romantic," Grégoire says, before guiding TIME underground into the giant—and decidedly unromantic—rainwater storage tank crucial to cleaning the Seine.

In recent years, smaller European cities, like Zurich, Munich, and Copenhagen, have opened urban swimming. There are also efforts under way to make swimming possible in Berlin's Spree River and Amsterdam's canals, with frequent meetings among cities to discuss what is required. Yet Grégoire is keen to point out that making the Seine swimmable could mean Paris' becoming the world's first giant urban area to



have center-city bathing. “It is a dream,” he says.

Some believe the Seine’s cleanup will spur similar projects elsewhere. “The Seine River is maybe the most romanticized river in history, in literature,” says Dan Angelescu, founder of Fluidion, a water-monitoring tech company based in Paris and Los Angeles, which has taken daily readings of pollution levels in both cities’ rivers since 2016. The Seine cleanup, he says, “obviously has a lot of emotional impact on people, and definitely acts as inspiration to others.”

Los Angeles, which will host the 2028 Olympics, has sent water and sanitation officials to Paris to study the Seine cleanup. When asked which other major cities are watching how Paris is cleaning the Seine, Angelescu responds, “I think everybody.”

But for Parisians, setting a global example may matter less than the tangible benefits of making the Seine swimmable again. There are environmental advantages: officials predict the revival of fish stocks that have dwindled over the decades, as well as the restoration of river foliage. A swimmable Seine could also give Parisians an escape from sweltering summer temperatures; Paris hit a record 108.6°F in 2019. Further, an economic motivation looms large: cleaning the Seine was a cornerstone of Paris’ winning bid for the 2024 Olympics, an event that could generate up to €10.7 billion ($11.4 billion) for the French economy and create 250,000 jobs, according to a 2017 study by the Centre for Law and Economics of Sport at the University of Limoges in west-central France.

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For decades, the steps leading into the river have served more as overlooks than access points

THE IDEA OF CLEANING UP the Seine is hardly new. In 1990, then Paris mayor and later French President Jacques Chirac declared he would launch a major cleanup of the Seine, and swim in it “in three years.” The idea withered over the years, and Chirac died in 2019, his grand ambition unfulfilled.

What makes this time different is the pressing Olympics deadline. When the current mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, presented her winning bid for the 2024 Games back in 2016, she promised that the city, home to 11 million people in the greater urban area, would undergo a drastic environmental upgrade by 2024. Key to her bid was enabling Olympic athletes to swim in the river, as they did when Paris hosted its first Olympics in 1900. “From 2015, we decided we were going to take advantage of the Olympic Games to considerably accelerate the vision,” Grégoire says. “It was a really important part of the candidacy.”

The 10K swimming marathon, the aquatic portion of the triathlon, and one Paralympic swimming event are set to start in the Seine—at a venue built under the ornate 19th century Alexandre III bridge in central Paris. The river will also be used

LEFT: AFP/GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT: SASHA ARUTYUNOVA

for the marquee opening ceremony: rather than the global norm of using an Olympic stadium, athletes will kick off the Games on a flotilla of boats sailing 6 km (3.7 mi.) through the city—past Paris' most famous landmarks strung along the Seine. "We need to use its monuments, its culture, its history," Paris Olympics head Tony Estanguet told TIME in an interview last year, about the significance of centering the Games on the Seine. Its banks can accommodate some 600,000 spectators, more than seven times the capacity of France's biggest stadium, in northeast Paris.

A year after the Games end, Parisians will have access to 26 new swimming pools in the Seine, expected to open by 2025, four of them in the city center. The pools will be walled off from heavy boat traffic that carries cargo, garbage, and about 7 million tourists a year.

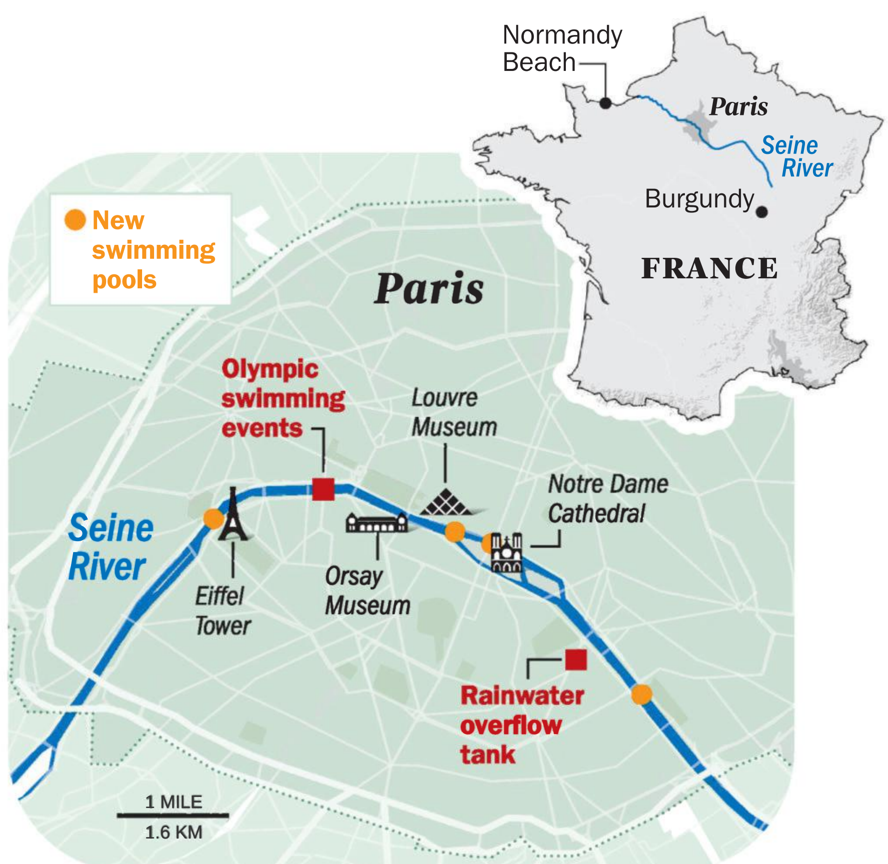
These changes represent a sharp break from all of Paris soiling its river for centuries. That includes throwing into the Seine the bodies of those killed in the 16th century religious wars between Protestants and Catholics, and in more recent decades discarding TV sets, motorcycles, and other large items in the river; 360 tons of large items are hauled out of the Seine every year, according to the Hauts-de-Seine local government on the western outskirts of Paris. But the biggest source of pollution in modern times has been the dumping of countless tons of wastewater—which includes domestic and industrial sewage—into the river.

Fortunately, the city says that as a result of recent infrastructure upgrades, the amount of untreated wastewater that ended up in the Seine in 2022 was 90% lower than 20 years ago. Despite this progress, pollution is still a problem; last year, 1.9 million cubic meters of untreated wastewater was spewed into the Seine. Dumping all of this into the river, officials say, is necessary to avoid saturating Paris' sewage network and flooding the city when especially heavy rain hits. But the Seine has paid the price over the years.

SOME 150 YEARS AGO, Napoleon's city planner Georges-Eugène Haussmann carried out a massive remake of Paris, putting into place infrastructure that may have been cutting-edge in the 1860s but is now largely antiquated, says Samuel Colin-Canivez, chief engineer for major sanitation works in Paris.

The Haussmann approach, for example, involved a combined sewer system, in which waste and stormwater runoff from the streets are collected in the same network. Since the 1980s, efforts have been made to modernize: spillways have been automated and fitted with valves. That has drastically cut down the amount of untreated wastewater going into the Seine, but has not entirely eliminated the problem.

That combination of older sewage systems and new ones, plus pipes carrying everything from drinking water to fiber-optic cables, means there is a labyrinth of infrastructure running under Paris' sidewalks and streets—Colin-Canivez calls it "a little museum." Figuring out how to divert excess rainwater amid this jumbled mess, so that domestic and industrial sewage is not flooded into the Seine, has been the costly and complicated engineering challenge.



The planned solution is centered on building the giant underground rainwater storage tank in southeastern Paris, which lies behind the cordoned-off construction site near the Austerlitz train station. There, a steep spiral staircase gouged into the ground opens into a giant, cavernous hole, walled with cement. When TIME visited in early February, two earthmovers were busily digging deeper and deeper, their lights illuminating the darkness, and their engines drowning out conversation.

The structure is mammoth, equivalent to roughly 20 Olympic-size swimming pools, and capable of holding up to 45,000 cu m (more than 10 million gal.) of rainwater. Once completed by next spring, it will measure 50 m (164 ft.) wide and 34 m (111.5 ft.) deep, and have one crucial job: to hold runoff water during a rainstorm, preventing it from overwhelming the city's sanitation network, and thereby having untreated waste flow into the Seine, as currently happens.

Once the project is completed, a tunnel will link the rainwater tank (or *bassin,* as the French call it) to the bank directly across, diverting it from the sewage system. From there, it will be released



MAGALI COHEN—HANS LUCAS/REDUX

slowly into the sewer network, then treated downstream in Paris' sewage-treatment plants, before finally passing into the river, all aided by the natural downhill flow.

THE OBSTACLES PARIS FACES in transforming its river are the same in old cities elsewhere, including in America. The U.S. set a goal under the 1972 Clean Water Act to make all rivers and lakes swimmable and fishable by 1983. Yet 40 years past that deadline, the plan is far from complete, with some blaming outdated monitoring equipment and lax standards. But one reason is clear: most of the world's largest cities were built long before modern sanitation networks were knit into urban planning. "You cannot put in a whole new sanitation system. It's ridiculously expensive," says Robert Traver, a leading urban-river specialist and engineering professor at Villanova University in Philadelphia. That city, he notes, has had a plan for years to transform its section of the Delaware River and make it swimmable; the river forms the city's eastern boundary.

But decades of budget cutting and politicking have slowed progress. "We have a 20-year plan, and at the end of the 20 years, we have another 20-year plan," Traver says. "Whether it is ever going to happen, I don't know." Looking over the engineering plans for the Seine with TIME, he says, "Nothing in Paris' plan is unique. But to do it is unique."

Yet cleaning the Seine might not be the final challenge for Paris officials. Parisians will need to feel safe enough to swim in those 26 swimming pools along the Seine that will open after the Olympics. Public confidence in the cleanup is not certain, given years of *E. coli* and enterococci bacteria in the water, and the possibility that a particularly heavy rainfall could contaminate parts of the river.

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During heavy rain, untreated waste can end up in the river, but officials say they have a fix

Last summer, hydrologists measuring fecal bacteria in the Seine at the Olympics' planned river venue in central Paris found that 90% of samples were already clean enough for swimming, according to city officials. The city is also hopeful that three pools built more recently along La Villette basin in eastern Paris, which opened for swimming in the summer of 2016, can help build public confidence that the Seine can be safe for dips. Grégoire says the water is tested daily for bacteria. "We manage to have the pools open for swimming 95% of the time," he says.

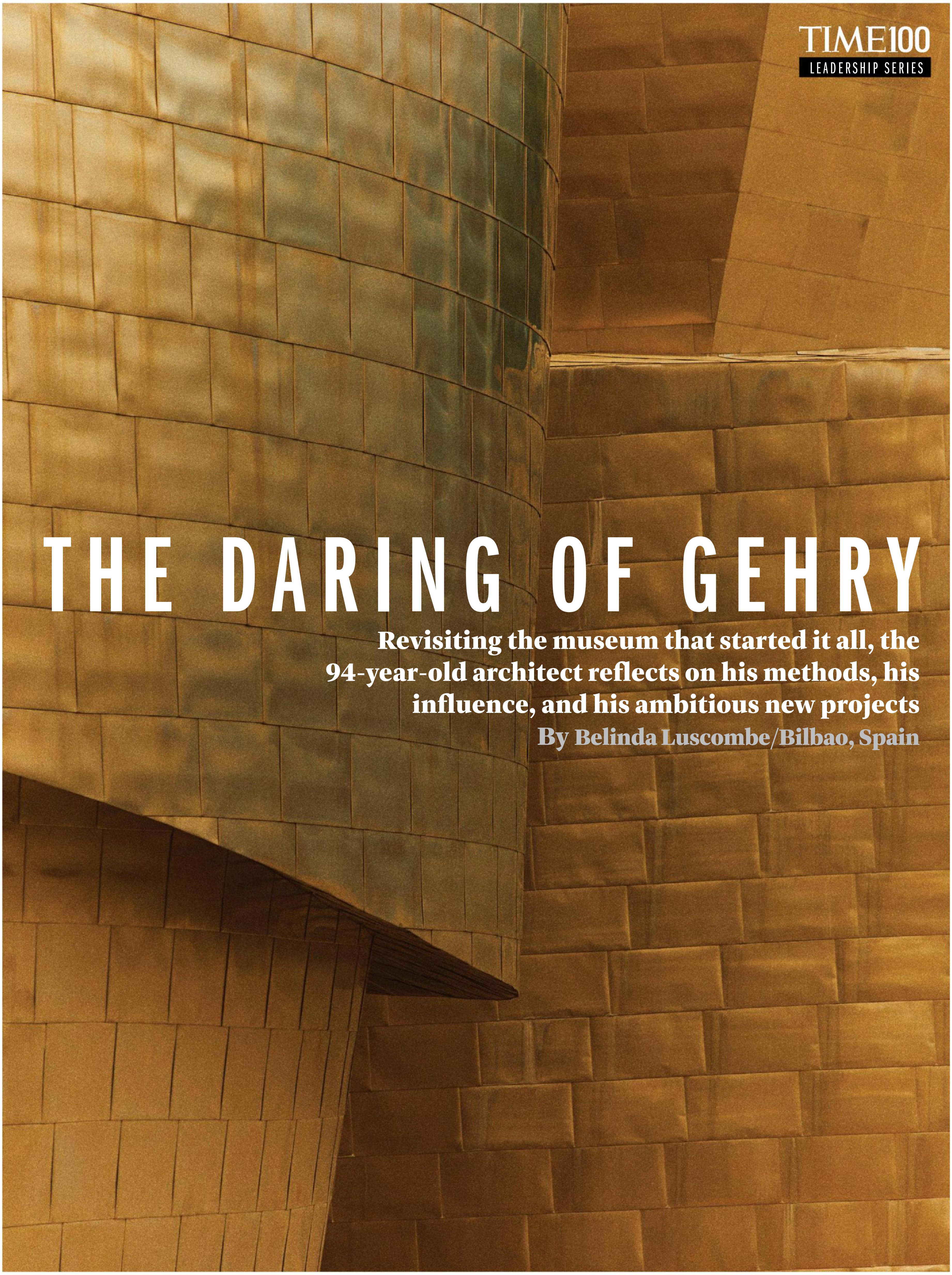
Still, when the polling agency Ifop asked 1,000 French people in 2021 what they thought of the Seine, 70% described it negatively, with some calling it dirty, polluted, and smelly.

For now, city officials are not deterred. They believe their plan will only build on the progress made in recent years to upgrade waste treatment—and make the city's river nearly always fit for a dip. "Our goal, really a philosophy, is that we have to stop polluting. It's a major global issue," Grégoire says. "By making the Seine swimmable, that is the best of the best examples." *—With reporting by* ANISHA KOHLI/NEW YORK ◻



Frank Gehry says he won't retire, but he might "just leave one day and not tell anybody about it."

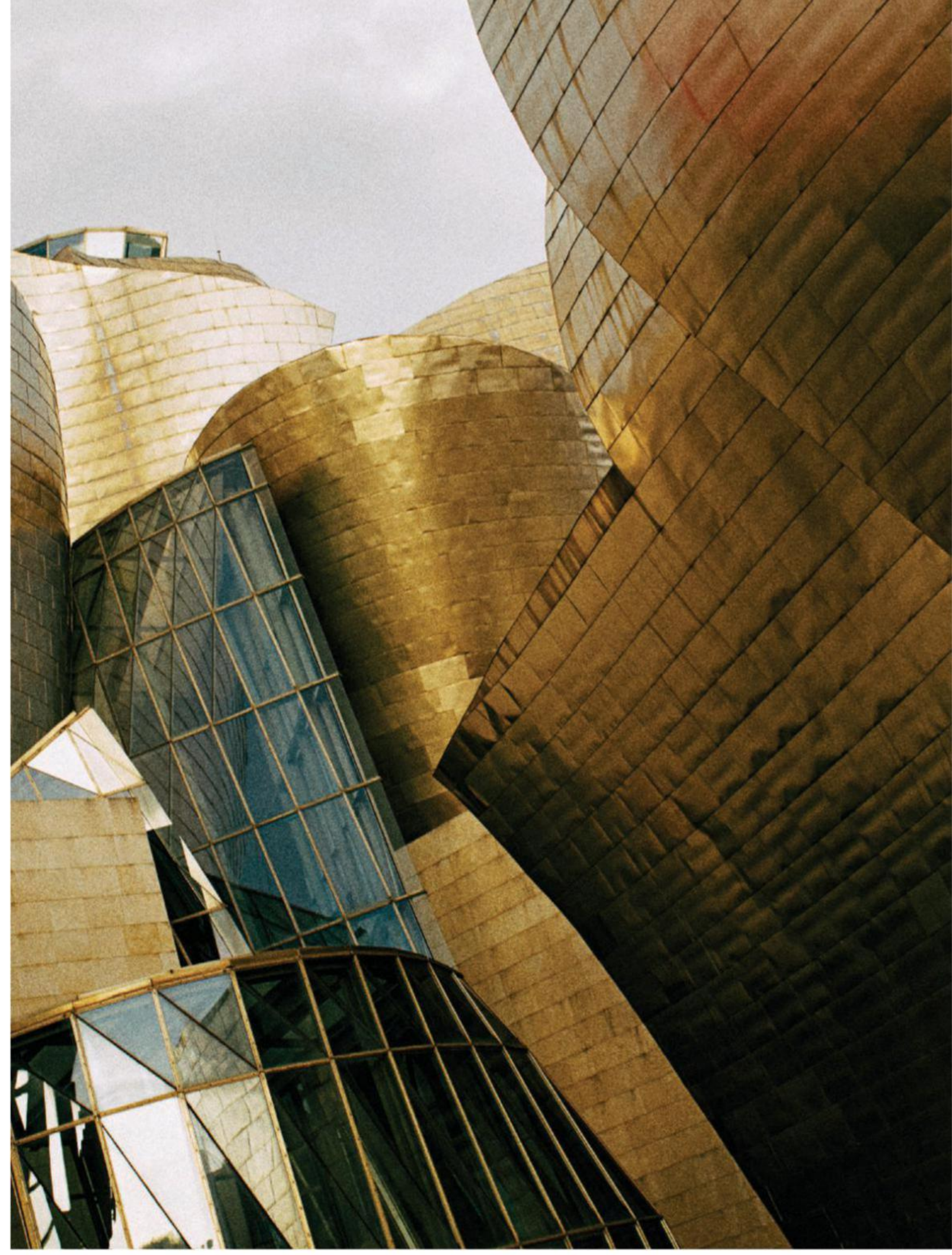
PHOTOGRAPHS BY VIVEK VADOLIYA FOR TIME



THE DARING OF GEHRY

Revisiting the museum that started it all, the 94-year-old architect reflects on his methods, his influence, and his ambitious new projects

By Belinda Luscombe/Bilbao, Spain



The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao cost $97 million and added an estimated $3.5 billion to the local economy

FRANK GEHRY WANTS TO BUILD A PARK IN LOS ANGELES. Not just a normal park on empty land; that's for lightweights. Gehry wants to take chunks of the legendarily unlovely Los Angeles River, a 51-mile engineered waterway mostly lined with concrete, and suspend parks over them. It sounds like a pipe dream, or in this case more of a channel dream; it's expensive, unprecedented, structurally complex, and anathema to many of the locals. But Gehry, 94, has made a career of overcoming such obstacles and, in the process, transforming cities.

Skepticism was also the initial response of officials in charge of selecting the architect for the Guggenheim Museum in the northern Spanish town of Bilbao, upon seeing the extremely rough models Gehry presented in 1991, in one version of which a tower was represented by an old bottle. "There was a lot of 'Oh my God, what?'" says Juan Ignacio Vidarte, the director general of the gallery, who was at the meeting where Gehry made his pitch. "But after trying to understand, there was the unanimous decision that this was the right project."

Gehry won the competition with a design that looks from some angles like a silverized Spanish galleon and from others like a prayer circle of titanium nuns. The finished building not only put Gehry on the map globally, and Bilbao on the map globally, but also became that very rare thing: a cultural artifact that was a classic as soon as it appeared. The officials behind the plan to revive Bilbao had hoped to get 500,000 people a year to visit. In the first three years after its 1997 opening, they got 4 million, and have had 21 million in the years since.

Partly because of that museum, and partly because of his string of pioneering edifices that followed, Gehry is now regarded as the most significant North American architect of his era, and perhaps the most celebrated living architect in the world. He has buildings on almost every continent, and shows no sign of stopping. He still heads into the office—and swims—every day. Construction will soon begin on his tallest building ever, in his birthplace of Toronto, and has just finished on one in Santa Monica, Calif., his home since the '60s. A recent study in the *Harvard Business Review* claims he is the only architect whose buildings deliver the promised return on investment. And he's got plenty of fire left, talking smack about how Santa Monica "builds a lot of high-level crap," leading that ambitious charge for the riverway, and hopping on a plane to Bilbao for a fiesta.

"I think it's a lot of happenstance," Gehry says of his success. He's not particularly interested in being an oracle; he leans into his Canadian diffidence, perhaps to disarm clients who are expecting a starchitect. He's not invested in the complex geometry he favors becoming the prevailing style. His working theory of how to create worthwhile structures is simple: "I don't think you have to spend egregious amounts of money to make buildings that are good for the community, good for our world, that are interesting, and that are humanly accessible," he says. "I don't think you have to pay a lot extra. You just have to want to do it."

Nevertheless, standing on the third floor of the Guggenheim during its 25th-anniversary celebrations in October 2022, even Gehry seemed a little awed. "When you look at your old buildings, you're very critical of every little detail," he says, looking around. "And I love it, I think. I find I love it." Even more, he loves how vibrant Bilbao now is, compared with when he first visited in 1991. The streets are buzzing. "There's a whole feeling of life that's different," he says. "It makes me feel good that we contributed to that."

EVEN 30 YEARS AGO, Gehry's success seemed very unlikely. In 1991, the year he won the Guggenheim commission, he was known for his quirky home in Santa Monica, a bunch of fish sculptures he now calls kitsch, and some oddball local structures. His most promising project, a new concert hall for the Los Angeles Philharmonic paid for by the Disney family, was in the limbo Hollywood calls "turnaround." Bilbao changed everything. "They were making accusations that [Disney Hall] was unbuildable," says Vidarte. "So we said, 'Well, we can prove them wrong.'"

Every great movement starts with discontent, and Gehry's was that he couldn't figure out how to build what he could draw. "I was looking for a way to express movement," he says. He found Modernism cold and post-Modernism reductive. Inspired by fish, he landed on curves. "I got into fish because they are millions of years old, they express movement, and they have an architectural quality," he says. But fish are slippery; he'd send builders detailed plans and mathematical calculations for sinuous walls and they'd follow them closely, yet the two halves wouldn't meet.

While traveling, he wondered how the curves of plane fuselages were fabricated, which led him to CATIA, the software



The TIME100 Leadership Series, presented in partnership with Rolex, profiles members of the TIME100 community—the world's most influential people. For video conversations and more, visit **time.com/leaders**

the French aerospace company Dassault used to design aircraft. Digital Project, the software that Gehry's office developed out of CATIA, now used by many of his peers, enables his team to iron out any wrinkles—or in Gehry's case, add them—before the builders break ground.

His 135-person office (Gehry barely knows how to use a computer) produces sometimes hundreds of digital iterations before they arrive at the combination of shapes and forms that meet all the necessary criteria. Having crunched the input from each of the project's many consultants, Digital Project then breaks those shapes into buildable structural elements, and produces data to allow factories to fabricate those elements. When the process is complete, and it can take a while, there are no surprises during construction.

GEHRY LOVES MUSIC. He has always had artists as friends, but his circle has expanded to musicians, including Gustavo Dudamel, Herbie Hancock, and Daniel Barenboim. He especially likes the way jazz players improvise around themes. His design process could be likened to structural jazz; he messes around with form over and over, getting the building to turn this way and that, iterating until he finds the version he wants to put down.

The software also enables Gehry to control costs. Once he has broken down the structural elements, he has a method for estimating how much the building will cost, based on volume, floor area, and exterior surfaces. Much has been written of the totality of Gehry's vision—as one Bilbao Guggenheim employee put it, they can't change so much as a fork in the restaurant without the approval of his office—but his obsession with costs is an equal plank of his success. "That's my ego; I gotta do that," says Gehry about bringing things in on budget. It may be that he learned the hard way that if he wants people to embrace his design ideas and way of building, he has to have a spotless budgetary record. He's still smarting over Disney Hall cost overruns. "I have a letter from the county people that we delivered the building for [its budget of $207 million]," he says. "Several board members that tried to control it wasted $150 million. That's all documented now, but I got blamed for it, as you can imagine."

Gehry's are among a tiny proportion of projects—0.5%, according to figures collected by Bent Flyvbjerg, a management professor at Oxford University and IT University of Copenhagen—that deliver on time and on budget and provide the economic benefit that they were intended to, whether it was to bring in more foot traffic, make transport more efficient, or elevate a city among tourists, investors, or developers. "What Frank Gehry accomplished in Bilbao and elsewhere is astonishing," says Flyvbjerg, whose book on the economics of building projects, *How Big Things Get Done,* analyzed cost data on 16,000 built structures from the past 87 years, including very mundane projects. "Nobody is doing what he's doing. Nobody has done these crazy things with materials."

The budget for the Guggenheim was $100 million, and it cost $97 million—and that's with a titanium exterior. Vidarte puts that down partly to Basque industriousness, but also to the fact that the local builders learned to trust Gehry's methods and he learned to trust that local officials weren't trying to cheap out. The Bilbao model, however, may not be replicable. Dozens of eager civic officials have come to the region since 1997 to find the secret lever that would catapult their once industrial cities into desirable cultural destinations. Pioneering buildings have been commissioned across the globe, in such underloved metropoles as Ordos, China; Dresden, Germany; Valencia, Spain; and Cincinnati, hoping to catch some of the Bilbao magic. None have had as much success.

While Gehry's memory for names sometimes fails him—he has a right-hand architect, Meaghan Lloyd, who acts as his memory bank—his curiosity does not. When he was very young, Gehry's grandfather used to read to him from the Talmud. The religious part never stuck, he says, but the way of looking at the world did. "The first word in the Talmud is *Why*?" he says. "That whole religion is based on curiosity. I love that about what that meant for what I was gonna do."

Long in a position to be picky about his clients, Gehry now tends to choose those who both pique his curiosity and give him a high level of autonomy. He finds houses to be taxing. ("I like people; I just don't like being in the middle of their personal lives.") And big commercial developers are too inflexible. ("It's very hard to convince them to work the way I work.")

If he gets his way, Gehry Partners will not carry on under his name once his curiosity peters out. He hopes the people who work at the firm, who include his son Sam, 44, will forge their own paths. But Gehry has no plans to retire. "I suppose the clock will stop when it wants to," he says. In the meantime, he's going to surround himself with the folks he likes best—the disciplined improvisors. "I love hanging out with people that don't know what they're doing or why," he says. "And then they do it." ◻



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CHERYL STRAYED IS HERE FOR YOU

BY LUCY FELDMAN/ PORTLAND, ORE.

The *Tiny Beautiful Things* author revisits her advice column in a television series

INSIDE

PLACING A BET IN THE *SUCCESSION* SWEEPSTAKES

A SMART NEW COMEDY BORN OUT OF ROAD RAGE

MICHELLE WILLIAMS PLAYS AN ARTIST LOST IN HER WORK

SOURCE PHOTOS: STRAYED (3); BEN EGGERS (1); CANVA (3)

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATIE KALUPSON FOR TIME



On the edge of Wallace Park in Portland, Ore., there is an unremarkable house with a camellia shrub out front. The house is painted a bluish gray now, but it might have been another color before. Cheryl Strayed is standing on the sidewalk in the rain with a smile on her face, conjuring a memory. This is where she took part in a yard sale in 1995, immediately after she—now quite famously—completed a 1,100-mile solo hike on the Pacific Crest Trail. At the time, she was a 27-year-old aspiring writer with 20¢ to her name. She sold whatever she could, including a pencil sharpener to a man who rode in on a bicycle. The man invited her to dinner with some friends, and later that night, Strayed met the person she would marry.

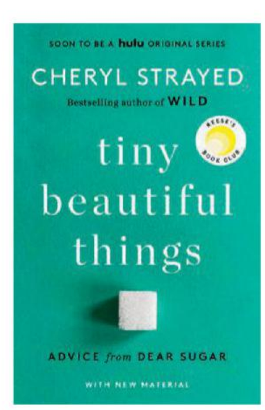
Strayed sees them everywhere: little signs, small reminders. It's one of the things that define her writing, that ability to draw connections—whether between a yard sale and the life she's built with her husband, or between a cry for help from a reader and a lesson she's learned from her own past.

Strayed, 54, has built a career on her dual abilities to tell the whole, ugly truth about herself and to empathize with others, creating a space for self-acceptance. *Wild,* the 2012 memoir of her Pacific Crest Trail journey, told the story of the sudden loss of her mother to lung cancer when Strayed was 22; her subsequent struggles, including a heroin habit and a divorce; and the hike that brought her back to herself. That book, which was adapted into a 2014 film starring Reese Witherspoon, has sold more than 4 million copies worldwide. It also launched Strayed's "accidental" career as a public speaker, for which she has traveled the world teaching writing and speaking to people about the great dreams and traumas of their lives, offering whatever wisdom and encouragement she can.

It was a fitting shift. Before *Wild* made her a household name, Strayed was going by another one: Sugar. In 2010, two years before *Wild* shot her to literary stardom, Strayed took over the advice column "Dear Sugar" for the online literary magazine the Rumpus. It was a no-pay job answering reader letters in the voice of a woman with a checkered history first dreamed up by the writer Steve Almond, and he was ready to pass the mantle. For two years, as Sugar, Strayed anonymously responded to letters seeking advice on everything from whether to have children to how to overcome jealousy. Instead of offering the practical guidance given by most advice columnists, Strayed treated each missive like an essay, sharing bits of her personal story to make broader points about the beauty and agony of being human. A collection of the columns, *Tiny Beautiful Things,* was published just a few months after *Wild.* Strayed and Almond launched a podcast, *Dear Sugars,* in 2014. Nia Vardalos adapted *Tiny Beautiful Things* into a play in 2016. And now, on April 7, Hulu will premiere a television series of the same name. Strayed executive-produced and helped write the series, with *Little Fires Everywhere* alum Liz Tigelaar serving as showrunner. With their team, they created the story of Clare (played by Kathryn Hahn and, in scenes from the past, Sarah Pidgeon), a mother whose life is crumbling when she's asked to take over as the columnist Sugar.

Sugar is, well, sticky. Her story keeps getting remade, and Strayed couldn't shake her if she tried. She and Almond stopped making their podcast in 2018; the Rumpus column was already long done. But strangers never stopped writing to her. They found her personal email or wrote to the old "Dear Sugar" address, seeking a piece of her wisdom. So she started a monthly newsletter. Giving advice is part of her now. The writer and the persona are inextricably linked. And it's precisely because they—both Sugar and Strayed—have lived through dark times, erred, and never claim to have all the answers that the advice is so potent. "I'm not some wise guru who's like, here's how to live," Strayed says, ambling along on our rainy walk. "I'm right down there in the muck with you."

TIGELAAR LIKES TO SAY that adult Clare in the emotional *Tiny Beautiful Things* is an alternate-reality version of Strayed, one who never hiked the Pacific Crest Trail and never wrote *Wild;* now 49 and devastated



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Tiny Beautiful Things *has been a book, a play, and now a TV show*



SOURCE PHOTOS: STRAYED (1); HULU (2); CANVA (3)

that she hasn't fulfilled her promise as a writer, she drinks too much, she creates chaos, and her marriage, her work, and her relationship with her kid are all suffering. But, divergent as their present-day realities may be, the Clare character and Strayed share the same history: both married the wrong person too young, both lost their mothers to cancer during their senior year of college, and both fell into self-destruction.

There is a scene in *Tiny Beautiful Things* when Frankie (the mother of young Clare, played by Merritt Wever) calls Clare home from college. She resists—she's busy, she has work and class and a life on campus—but Frankie insists. We see Clare enter the house where she grew up with her mom and her brother Lucas, the table set for an unusually formal dinner. Her mother is wearing lipstick and a nice dress. She made spinach lasagna and bought ice cream for dessert. Clare fumes. "I can't just come home just because you miss me," she says. This is when Frankie tells her children: she's going to die.

"I get chills even saying this to you," Strayed says. "That was straight from my life." She had the surreal experience of sharing the story of how she learned of her mother's illness in the writers' room for the series, then watching the actors play out the scene. The same thing happened with *Wild*. "Who does this?" she says. "It's like, OK, people, now you're going to re-enact Cheryl's 10 most painful moments, and Cheryl's going to sit there and watch, sometimes over and over."

'I'm right down there in the muck with you.'

Strayed being Strayed, she found something heartening in the scene. Watching young Clare storm into the house with her selfish, early-20s attitude, Strayed recognized that any young woman trying to establish her independence might behave the same way. She couldn't have known what her mother was about to reveal. Observing Pidgeon step into the character, Strayed says, "I feel such a sense of gentleness for the younger version of myself … It's the most specific and bizarre form of therapy."

This is the story that she has carried with her for more than 30 years. It was the subject of her first book, the 2005 novel *Torch,* of *Wild,* of so many important moments in the "Dear Sugar" column and *Tiny Beautiful Things* in all its forms. With the show, Strayed emphasizes that she wanted to tell a "true story" about grief. Clare's problem is not that she hasn't moved on from her mother's death, she explains. A primal loss like hers is a trauma that re-emerges again and again. When Strayed had her first child, she had to reckon again with her grief, and when she turned 45 and outlived her mother, she did again.

She likens grief to a box you'll hold forever—what it means to you is determined by how bravely you look into it. "Anyone who reads my work or sees the show knows how very much I have turned my deepest sorrow into beauty," she says. "That's what grief is. If we work really, really hard, we can get to that place."

THE RAIN IS COMING DOWN harder, so I set our course toward a coffee shop I know nearby. With the glowing storefront in sight, Strayed suddenly stops, looking downward. I follow her gaze. I see a penny in the middle of the sidewalk, wet and a little grimy. She sees another sign from the universe: there are good things here. "I've had all the luck," she says, urging me to take it. Instead, I suggest we leave it for the next person to find, so she bends down to touch a finger to the surface, transferring some of her good fortune.

Shaking off the wet as we enter the café, I realize the mistake I've made. There it was: my chance to claim a little piece of Strayed's magic for myself. That's what we congregants of Sugar do. We take her words of encouragement and sympathy, her tough love and her powerful example, her belief in humanity, and we tuck them in our pockets and hold onto them.

Inside, we sit down and continue the conversation. Strayed tells me she's working on another memoir, a project she's been wrestling with for a while. She tells me more about her family, about awkward times when she's been recognized in public, about her writing process. Then, on the walk back to where we started, she brings me right to the spot where we left the penny. It's still there, shinier than before. "It's destiny," she says. ◻



A fateful phone call gives Tom (Macfadyen) the upper hand

ESSAY

The case for betting on Tom Wambsgans' *Succession*

BY JUDY BERMAN

MIDWAY THROUGH THE THIRD SEAson of *Succession*, Tom Wambsgans tells his underling and cousin by marriage, Greg Hirsch, a colorful anecdote from an empire in decline. "Sporus was a young slave boy—he was Nero's favorite," Tom (Matthew Macfadyen) explains. "Well, Nero pushed his wife down the stairs, and then he had Sporus castrated, and he married him instead. And he gave him a ring, and he made him dress up like his dead wife." The takeaway: "I'd castrate you and marry you in a heartbeat."

In the HBO dramedy's Season 3 finale, Tom sets that prophecy in motion. An executive at Waystar Royco—the media behemoth led by Brian Cox's cutthroat octogenarian patriarch, Logan Roy—and the husband of the boss's daughter Shiv Roy (Sarah Snook), he does the corporate equivalent of pushing his wife down the stairs. When she alerts him that she and her brothers Kendall (Jeremy Strong) and Roman (Kieran Culkin) are teaming up to block Logan from selling the business, which would jeopardize what the siblings see as their birthright, Tom turns around and warns Logan. Which raises a question, going into the show's fourth and final season: Could Tom Wambsgans be the successor Logan is looking for?

There are plenty of reasons to doubt it. When the new season opens, Tom has penetrated Logan's inner circle. But before betraying Shiv, he was her satellite, offering opinions no one seemed to hear. Capable of delivering florid monologues to the slightly more marginal Greg, Tom was content to back his formidable wife.

Yet it was Shiv who miscalculated in Season 3. Just scrupulous enough to question the Roys' flirtation with fascism, Shiv watched Roman replace her as Logan's heir apparent. She took out her anger on Tom, even as he panicked that his willingness to take the fall for Waystar's corruption would land him in prison—a sacrifice no one appreciated. When Shiv dropped a pillow-talk bombshell—"I don't love you"—it was clear she'd pushed him too far.

It would be a mistake to interpret Tom's betrayal as emotional

IT WOULD BE a mistake, however, to interpret Tom's betrayal as entirely emotional. Sure, he might be burning Shiv because he thinks ruthlessness will win him her respect. But he also uses the inside information she dumps on him to his strategic advantage. When Ken tries to exploit Tom's scapegoat status to recruit him to the anti-Logan resistance, Tom demurs: "I've seen you get f-cked a lot, and I've never seen Logan get f-cked once."

That kiss-off reveals the siblings' blind spot. Each has their own fatal flaw. As Logan's spacey eldest child, Connor (Alan Ruck), puts it: "Roman's a knucklehead, Shiv's a fake, Ken's screwy." Collectively, they share an inflated confidence in their own abilities born of inherited power. Tom is grounded enough to see that Logan has been so successful—and his children haven't—for a reason. He's also more likely to remain invested in the company (or what's left of it should the sale he helped engineer in the Season 3 finale go through) once Logan is gone than Logan's kids, who are mostly competing for their dad's love.

Tom Wambsgans is a nasty, venal, nihilistic person, as anyone hoping to take Logan's place must be. "Tom would open the gates to the death camps," Macfadyen has said. That moral flexibility serves him well as head of Waystar's right-wing news network, ATN. Yet he's not an ideologue or a loose cannon. He's not sanctimonious like Shiv, histrionic like Kendall, prone to humiliating the family through performative onanism like Roman, or silly like Connor. He simply wants to back a winner. And for the first time, he's starting to believe that winner might just be himself.

Succession *airs Sunday nights on HBO*

THE CONTENDERS

WHO WILL SUCCEED?



SHIV ROY
The most stable of Logan's kids is also, sadly for her, the most susceptible to shame.



ROMAN ROY
His love for Logan is genuine. Unfortunately, so is his compulsion to share lewd photos.



KENDALL ROY
He might've literally killed someone, but his dad insists he's not enough of a killer to lead.



GERRI KELLMAN
This Waystar veteran is the safe choice. But since when did Logan make safe choices?

SUCCESSION: HBO (5); BEEF: NETFLIX (2)

REVIEW

Ali Wong and Steven Yeun face off in a *BEEF* for the ages

IMPLICIT IN EVERY VIRAL ROAD-RAGE video is the same question: What is wrong with these people? *BEEF,* a wild black comedy from first-time creator Lee Sung Jin, delves deep into the sources and fallout of two L.A. motorists' fury. Danny Cho (Steven Yeun) is a struggling contractor wracked with guilt over his immigrant parents' involuntary return to Korea. Amy Lau (Ali Wong) longs to sell her thriving houseplant business and stay home with her husband George (Joseph Lee) and daughter June (Remy Holt). Their parking-lot showdown leads to a ridiculous chase through suburbia—and then months of ever escalating attempts to ruin each other's lives.

At first, this premise seems better suited to a feature than a 10-episode Netflix series. But Lee is doing more than just a live-action *Looney Tunes* bit. The pranks yield insights into both characters' unhappiness. Desperate to maintain the serene front that's vital to her brand, Amy quietly seethes over a meddling mother-in-law (Patti Yasutake), the manipulations of a billionaire (Maria Bello) who might acquire the business, and George's insistence on following in his artist father's footsteps despite his lack of talent. Danny is in debt to a scary cousin (played by the artist David Choe) and feels responsible for his slacker younger brother Paul (Young Mazino).

The show fleshes out not just its leads but also their families, who face stressors of their own. The irony is that for all their bad behavior, Danny, Amy, and most of the people around them are far from evil. But by failing to extend empathy, everyone contributes to a rapidly accelerating crisis.

One of several upcoming TV projects from A24, the studio behind *Everything Everywhere All at Once, BEEF* is the kind of smart, sophisticated, polished comedy that Netflix has mostly stopped making. It's also the rare show that honors the differences in class, ethnicity, and personality that make each of its mostly Asian American characters unique, rather than flattening them into some exercise in "positive representation." It's a remarkably confident debut from *Dave* vet Lee, and one that ups its ante until the bitter, bighearted end. —J.B.

BEEF *arrives on Netflix on April 6*



Danny (Yeun) rages over his lack of control



Amy (Wong) hates selling her husband's ugly art

REVIEW

An artist creates, amid distraction and because of it

BY STEPHANIE ZACHAREK



Williams at work, capturing the shape and texture of feeling

MAKING ANYTHING OF VALUE—A work of art, a poem, a solid piece of furniture—demands a deep descent into the self, to the point that it's easy to neglect the needs of others in your orbit. Stay in the zone too long and there's a danger of forgetting how to have a simple conversation or make a phone call, of going a little feral. Going into that inner wilderness is great, as long as we can follow the trail of bread crumbs back to the world of human connection.

That's just one of the ideas at play in Kelly Reichardt's quietly extraordinary *Showing Up,* a movie so fine-grained that you're almost not prepared for the subtle power of its ending—the story is brought to land, almost literally, with the beating of wings. Michelle Williams is Lizzy, a sculptor living in Portland, Ore., and getting ready to mount a small but, for her, important show. Before we even meet her, we see soft watercolor sketches of her ceramic works-in-progress, carefully molded figures of women of all ages who seem to be dancing, or weeping, or possibly both. These works are rounding the bend toward completion, and we watch as Lizzy scrutinizes them, tracing their now hardened contours, as if trying to reclaim with her fingers one last memory of the formerly soft clay. This, in movie form, is one idea of what it's like to make and think about art; its meaning can seem to pass through our skin, a mysterious vibration.

But like all artists Lizzy is also, whether she wants to be or not, a person living in the world. She has a small studio and living space that she rents from her closest friend, Jo (the remarkable Hong Chau), also an artist, with a personality as breezy as Lizzy's is thorny: though she too is preparing a local show—two, in fact—she's happy to spend any spare time she's got installing a tire swing in the backyard of her small apartment building, rather than addressing the more immediate problem presented by Lizzy's broken hot-water heater. Lizzy watches, her brow a tiny thundercloud, as Jo twirls in her newly installed swing, living the idea of what we want an artist's life to be. Everything about Lizzy is coiled tight: What about her hot water? What about *her* needs? She's preparing a show too. She stands there, sullen but also perplexed, her arms dangling in her shapeless cotton clothes like a Roz Chast cartoon come to life.

THIS IS THE MAGIC of Williams' performance, playing a woman whose art demands deep inner travel, but whose movement through the everyday world could use some improvement. Retreating into the world of her "girls," as others refer to her sculptures, is less bewildering to Lizzy than the real life she's stuck with. She has a dull day job in a small arts college run by her mother Jean (Maryann Plunkett); her father Bill (Judd Hirsch), once a prolific ceramicist, has retreated into a world of flaky hippiedom. She's also consumed with worry about her brother Sean (played superbly by John Magaro). He may be the biggest genius of the whole gang, but he's also the most fragile, a semi-lost soul whose clumsy manners belong to another world.

This is one idea of what it's like to make and think about art

Lizzy has more moderate problems too: it's her cat, Ricky, a small orange jerk, who sets the plot in motion with a flick of his paw. Lizzy is bedeviled by all of it, and Williams, a formidable actor, channels her annoyance like a subsonic hum. This is the fourth movie she and Reichardt have made together. They're simpatico souls; Reichardt (who also co-wrote the script, with her frequent collaborator Jonathan Raymond) couldn't have made a movie as weird and great and intimate as this one with just anybody. The on-the-surface modesty of *Showing Up* is a kind of sorcery. It's in the days afterward, when you've left its spell and gone back to the world, that its essence is more likely to take shape—a shape you could almost trace with your thumb, as if it were made of clay and not images, air, and feeling. ◻

A24


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For this issue's profile of Bad Bunny, the global superstar spoke to TIME (mostly) in Spanish—and inspired our first Spanish-language back-page interview

The rise of Bad Bunny has been all the more impressive for how he's come to dominate pop culture while singing in his native Spanish. Find the full interview that formed the basis of this story, as well as an English translation, at ***time.com/badbunny***

Actualmente, estamos en el centro de L.A. ¿Te gusta la ciudad? Realmente, sí me gusta. Siempre me ha gustado desde que he estado viniendo unos años. Es un lugar al que desde que era chamaquito, antes de todo esto, siempre soñé con ir. Siempre soñé con ir algún día a Los Ángeles porque era fanático de los Lakers y Kobe.

¿Dónde están las mejores playas? ¿Los Ángeles o Puerto Rico? Ya sabes la respuesta a eso. Puerto Rico, definitivamente mil veces. Todavía no me he metido en el agua. Voy a ver si en verano el agua se calienta y luego voy.

Al crecer en el pueblo de Almirante Sur, ¿cuáles fueron sus mejores recuerdos de su infancia? Mi madre era maestra y mi padre era camionero. Así que sabes que éramos gente trabajadora. Muy católico, nosotros fuimos a la iglesia. Teníamos que hacerlo bien en la escuela. Crecí con mucho amor de mi madre y mi padre. Los vi a veces esforzándose, pasando por momentos difíciles para traernos comida y otros momentos fáciles. Fueron momentos hermosos, a veces de incertidumbre, pero al final siempre agradecido con el núcleo en el que crecí; mi familia, mi barrio, mi pueblo y la forma en que crecí, porque de ahí, adquirí mucha experiencia y muchos conocimientos que me hacen ser la persona que soy hoy.



Bad Bunny's Un Verano Sin Ti *was the first all-Spanish album to get an Album of the Year Grammy nomination*

¿Qué papel jugó la música en tu vida en tus primeros años? Crecí siempre escuchando música y trataba de imitar las voces de los cantantes y los sonidos que hacían … Siempre fui un gran fan de los artistas. Por eso cuando me preguntan '¿Qué artista te inspiró?' Nunca digo uno solo porque escuché tantos artistas y géneros como el reggaetón, que tiene muchos artistas que me inspiraron, y la salsa. Diría que todo el movimiento de la música latina me inspiró.

¿Qué piensan tus padres y tu familia acerca de que eres el artista más grande del mundo? No creo que lo sepan. *[Risas]*

¿Cree que el gobierno de Estados Unidos le ha fallado al pueblo puertorriqueño? Yo creo que el gobierno le ha fallado a Puerto Rico, le ha fallado a Estados Unidos. Igualmente, Puerto Rico le ha fallado a Puerto Rico. Creo que todos los gobiernos le han fallado a su país alguna vez.

¿Todavía vives en Puerto Rico? Siempre digo que vivo en PR porque, no sé … Pero al final del día siempre regresaré a Puerto Rico y me quedaré para siempre.

Parece que has estado aprendiendo mucho inglés. ¿Aprender el idioma es algo por lo que te sentiste presionado o que siempre te interesó? No. Siempre he dicho que debo aprender. Hay muchas cosas que estoy perdiendo, como oportunidades, por el idioma. No me importaba [aprender] inglés. Pero ahora si, creo que me importa. Ha sido tan natural simplemente hablar y practicar, pero sin presión o con un objetivo o algo así.

¿Dirías que 2023 es el año para ti? Todos los días hago ejercicio, descanso, veo televisión, escribo música, pero sin presión, no es que tenga que hacerlo, es porque me gusta.

Por último, necesitamos saber … ¿Tienes una canción con Justin Bieber a punto de salir? ¿Hay una canción con Justin Bieber? ¿Es un rumor? No, no tengo una canción con Justin Bieber. Eso es falso. Nunca vas a saber lo que voy a hacer. No te mientas a ti mismo, no vas a saber mi próxima movida. —ANDREW R. CHOW *and* MARIAH ESPADA

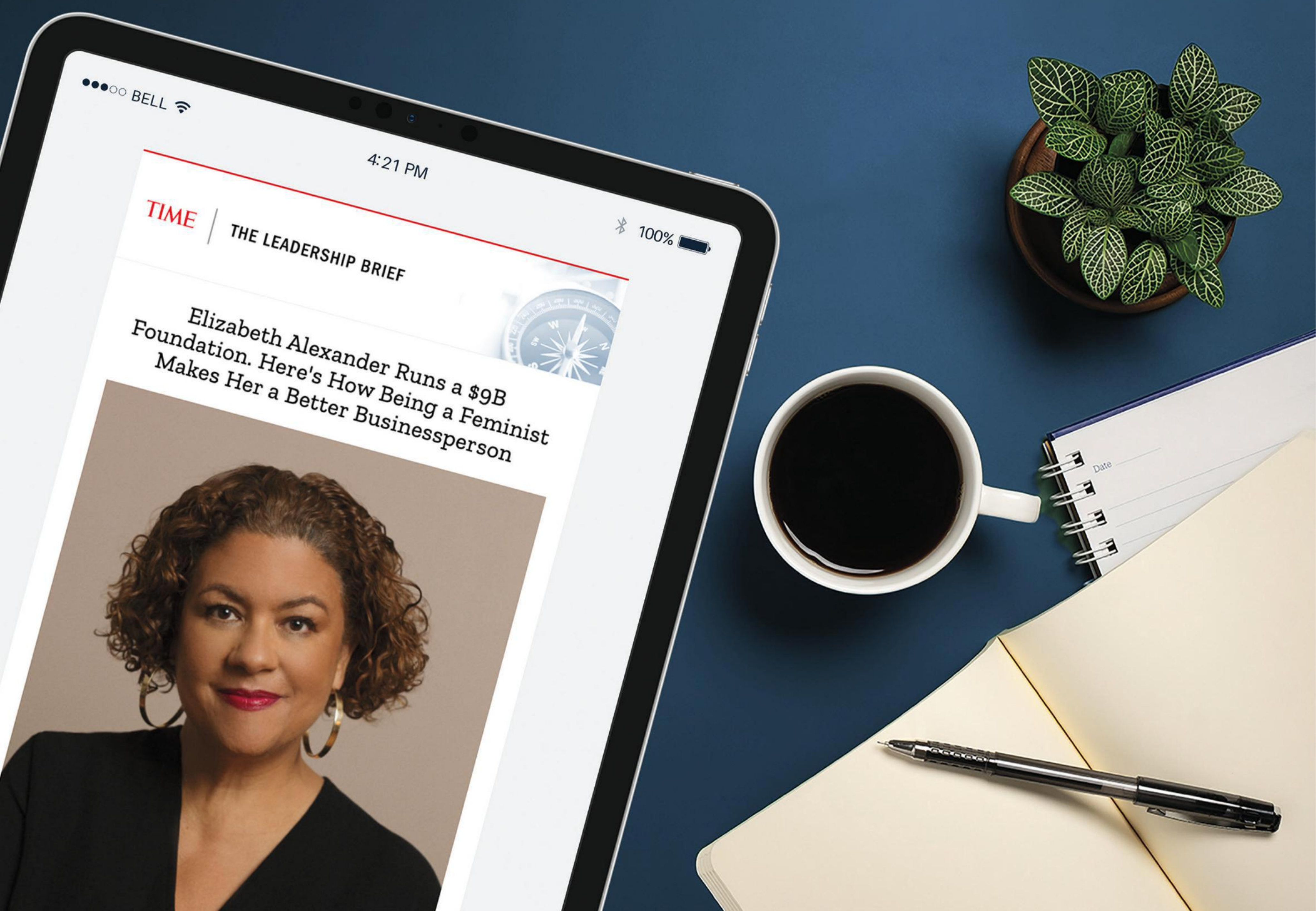
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